WOLF 359
"Succulent Rat-Killing Tar"

By Gabriel Urbina

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INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - 1900 HOURS

RECORDING BEGINS

EIFFEL
This is the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel. I am speaking from the comms room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Welcome to day four-hundred and forty-eight of our orbit around-

He BELCHES loudly.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... red dwarf star Wolf 359. Today's weather report: pretty nominal. Surface temperature's averaging at about... Oh, a crisp 4,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Instruments are picking up less than ten per cent chance of stellar flares.

Just another happy, sunny day out here. Seven and a half light years away from Earth...

Eiffel pauses for a moment, and we hear the tinkling of instruments and machinery at work. The room HUMS with constant mechanical activity and beeps.

It's the closest thing these people get to silence.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Minkowski and I finally cleared up that problem with the temperature on the station. All the climate control systems are back to normal, and our stalwart auto-pilot HERA promises she'll be a bit less gung-ho in her efforts to conserve power.

You know, I understand that, as an artificial intelligence, it's difficult for her to remember that human beings can't function at four hundred below zero.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That's fine, everyone makes mistakes, but if she could stop talking about my, "fragile, carbon-based, uncomfortably liquid body," it'd be a real breakthrough for human-AI relations.

Speaking of scientific advancement, it's been three days since Hilbert's come out of his lab.

I think this is the fourth time since mission launch he’s been sitting with us at dinner, suddenly yelled, “Of course!” and ran off. I can’t understand what Hilbert is saying half the time anyway. It’s just as well - I’m still banned from the lab. You accidentally knock over one vat of acid and almost burn a hole in the hull and suddenly you're... well, yeah, I guess that's fair.

Whatever you're up to, Dr. Hilbert, best of luck.

We hear the sound of Eiffel UNWRAPPING and OPENING a carton. Eiffel TAPS it on a table three times.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I've gotta be careful with these; Minkowski confiscated <u>another</u> cigarette carton today. You'd think that after a year and a half on this tin can our resident Statsi agent would let up. I get it... Cigarettes are contraband, but it's not like if she let me have one I'd immediately light it and accidentally set the station's air supply on fire. Again.

The people on this station have <u>serious</u> trust issues.

That makes the tally seventeen cartons that she's confiscated, and...

We hear the sound of a PANEL OPENING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One, two, three still tucked in the back of the auxiliary comms panel. Safe and sound - I gotta stay sharp about where I leave these things, though.

The panel CLOSES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I know I can't actually smoke them. I just like being able to... have them in my mouth. I like the taste.
(now with a cigarette in his mouth)
Oh yeah... eat your heart out, you succulent rat-killing tarr.

All righty folks, let's see if we can actually get some work done, shall we?

We hear the sound of a CONSOLE BOOTING UP over the following:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Our mission tonight is the same as last night... and the night before that... and the previous four-hundred nights, unto the end of my attention span: scan the Heavens for any signs of intelligent life. Yesterday we spent a very relaxing three hours listening to absolute silence coming from the Theta Nu quadrant, and that was great. That was just <u>great</u>. Today, how about we take a look at what's going on around... the Alpha Psi sector?

We hear some TYPING into a console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is today the day that we make first contact? What do you say.... Alpha Psi One?

We hear a BURST OF STATIC. After a few moments:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
<u>Outstanding</u>.

(shuts off static,
scribbles on paper)
Alpha Psi sector, bearing one... no contact. What do you say, Alpha Psi two?

Another BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(again, scribbling)
Bearing two... same... as... it... ever... was. How are you feeling, bearing three?

Another BURST OF STATIC. After a BEAT:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(over the static)
Well, folks I don't need to tell you that we are in for one <u>exciting</u> evening. I mean, I don't know if you have any dinner plans, but-

Suddenly, the static CHANGES. For a second it kind of WHOOPS, the kind of noise a radio makes as it changes station. Then, back to STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... what the hell was that? Did I just hear...? I... thought I heard something for a moment there.

Umm... hello?

STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Alpha Psi sector, bearing three? Is anybody out there? Does anybody copy?

STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... no, I suppose not. I must be hearing things. I mean, hearing things is my job but - you know what I mean.

BEAT. STATIC plays in the background.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You know what, I think I need some coffee. Yeah, that'll make things better. I'll... I'll be right back.

RECORDING STOPS.

RECORDING RESUMES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aaaaall right, I'm back. And I have coffee.

We hear him take a SLURP through a straw.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Of course, it's not actually coffee. It's mostly blended seaweed with some proteins and stimulants. Hilbert says he got it as close to the taste of coffee grounds as he could, but... that's not saying much.

SLURP.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Calling it coffee helps.

SLURP.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Speaking of the good doctor, I passed by his lab on the way to the kitchen. Some pretty weird noises coming from inside, even for him. Check this out.

EIFFEL'S RECORDING: It's a disconcerting and difficult to follow mixture of sounds. Some BANGING, some THUMPING, SCRAPING, etc. Mixed in there, are definite hints of some kinds of animal noises: SNARLS, HISSES, ROARS, etc. It's all jumbled up, chaotic gibberish, however. Nothing we can identify.

After a few seconds of that:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So that's happening. Once again, I hope you know what you're doing, Dr. Hilbert.

There is the sound of BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh no. Looks like we have an unscheduled caller on line one, dear listeners.

MINKOWSKI
(over intercom)
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yeah, Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

EIFFEL
How may I be of service Commander Minkowski, sir? Don't tell me you need more cigarettes already, I gave you a full carton this afternoon.

MINKOWSKI
Very funny. Eiffel, did you read your copy of Pryce and Carter?

EIFFEL
My copy of what?

MINKOWSKI
Pryce and Carter's Deep Space Survival Procedure Protocol Manual.

EIFFEL
Was that one of those mandatory mission training things?

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

EIFFEL
In that case, yes, I definitely did.

MINKOWSKI
Did you now? Because I happened to find your copy of the D.S.S.P.P.M. floating in the observation deck.

EIFFEL
Oh?

MINKOWSKI
Still in its plastic wrapping.

EIFFEL
Oh. In *that* case, I've been busy.

MINKOWSKI
Get to it, Eiffel. We may be eight lights years from Earth, but we still do things by the book - <u>this</u> book, in fact. I want you to have it read by 0600 tomorrow.

EIFFEL
Gee, Commander, I'd love to do that but I've got all of this deep space survey to do tonight, very, very complicated technical stuff that requires my full attention. So-

MINKOWSKI
If you can't recite that entire book backwards and forwards by tomorrow I'll not only confiscate the cigarettes you've got in the comms panel, I'll make you watch as I flush them out the airlock. One by one.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well, clearly this is an important matter that requires my immediate attention.

MINKOWSKI
Glad we understand each other.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
(dripping with venom)
And I'm so glad that your shriveled husk of a dictator's heart is as warm as a decompression chamber. Uggh. All right, let's just get this over with. HERA?

HERA
Yes, Officer Eiffel?

We now hear HERA, Hephaestus's Station on-board AI. She speaks with a pleasant, bright female voice, although periodically there are slight DISTORTIONS in her voice. (changes in her pitch, repeated words, etc.)

EIFFEL
Have you got this... Jimmy Carter thing in your databanks?

HERA
Pryce and Carter's Deep Space Survival Procedure Protocol Manual is among the files I have access to.

EIFFEL
Could you please reproduce the contents of that file?

HERA
Certainly. Would you like me to broadcast this throughout all of the station?

EIFFEL
Oh, uh, no, no, no. Let's have this be a "just the two of us, totally secret, never tell Commander Minkowski" thing, all right?

HERA
Very well. Ready to begin?

EIFFEL
Ready as I'll ever be. Take me away, sweetheart.

An aggressively cheerful, monotonously bland MELODY begins playing through the intercoms. It's the kind of thing that you'd hear while watching a how-to video on an elevator. Over that, we get-

HERA
Pryce and Carter's Deep Space Survival Procedure Protocol Manual.

Over the following we periodically hear Eiffel REACTING. It's mostly GROANS.

HERA (CONT'D)
“Congratulations on your assignment to a deep space outpost. Whether your stay is of a scientific, exploratory, or disciplinary nature, we hope that you enjoy a peaceful, restive, minimal-casualty residency in your spacecraft of choice.”

“To maximize your chances of a successful return to Earth with all your limbs and faculties intact, please display a strict adherence to the following one thousand and one survival tips.”

EIFFEL
One-thousand and... it's the extra one that's really annoying. Geez, I'm gonna need more coffee.

HERA
“Deep Space Survival Tip Number One: Always read the instructions before operating any piece of machinery. Deviating from this might result in the loss of valuable equipment, which could lead to heavy fines or death.

“Deep Space Survival Tip Number Two: begin every day with a few minutes of exercise. Isometric exercises are no harder to do in zero gravity than they are on Earth and just as rewarding.”

“Deep Space Survival Tip Number Three: Spacewalks are a serious matter. They are very delicate operations filled with hazards, so only use them as a source of amusement if you are <u>really</u> bored.”

“Deep Space Survival Tip Number Four: Conserve your oxygen. Even in environments with an air recycling system, oxygen can be limited, so keep your breathing at a slow, steady pace. Remain calm. Failing to remain calm, could result in your grisly, gruesome death, so whatever you do, do not panic. Panicking will only serve to accelerate your oxygen consumption and make your already likely demise a certainty. If you want to avoid dying, painfully, alone, in the cold darkness of space, gasping desperately as freezing oblivion silences your pathetic hopes and dreams... relax."

"Deep Space Survival Tip Number Five: Remain positive at all times. Maintain a cheerful attitude even in the face adversity. Remember: when you are smiling the whole world smiles with you, but when you're crying you're in violation of fleet-wide morale codes and should report to your superior officer for disciplinary action."

"Deep Space Survival Tip Number Six: be mindful of your personal hygiene. Begin every day with a shower, and remember to brush your teeth at least four times a day."

As HERA continues unto Survival Tip Number 6, the console lets off a series of BEEPS. We hear the same RADIO NOISE that we heard before.

EIFFEL
Oh my God, there it is again!

HERA
... remember to brush your teeth at least four times -

EIFFEL
HERA, shut up.

She does. The music and the narration are CUT OFF. The radio noise continues.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That's definitely a transmission. I might be able to clean it up a bit, actually. Come here, you. Hold on.

We hear Eiffel tinkering with his controls. The RADIO NOISES FLUCTUATE WILDLY. It gets louder, softer, goes up, goes down... for a moment here and there we might even be able to make out something familiar beneath all the interference.

It feels like Eiffel is getting somewhere when suddenly -

STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No, no, no! Come back!

STATIC. BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Damn it... I've lost the signal again. But I'm not crazy - there's definitely something out there. C'mon, talk to me, whoever you are. I say again, Alpha Psi Sector, bearing three - do you copy?

His question is answer by the distant, muffled sound of an EXPLOSION.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What... what was that? Are we seriously blowing up now?

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is there a survival tip about what to do if we're blowing up?

BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
(over intercom)
What the hell was that? Eiffel, were you smoking again?

EIFFEL
I was not!

MINKOWSKI
If I come down there and find a single burnt match -

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over intercom, coughing)
Eiffel's not at fault, commander. Loud noise came from my laboratory. Apologies, didn't mean to cause distraction.

Hilbert talks very quickly, and in the background of his intercom we can occasionally hear the CRACKLE OF FLAMES.

MINKOWSKI
Doctor Hilbert? Are you okay?

HILBERT
Naturally. Why is the state of my health in question?

MINKOWSKI
That was a rather loud explosion.

HILBERT
Oh. Erroneous assumption. Loud noise was not explosion.

EIFFEL
Then what was it?

HILBERT
Don't know. Something else. Not explosion. Something... less destructive. A hair drier perhaps.

BEAT. The sound of flames gets LOUDER.

MINKOWSKI
Dr. Hilbert... is anything around you on fire?

HILBERT
Definitely not. Well, probably. Too busy with experimental sample to look around. Rigorous observation cycle, must devote full attention. Hilbert out.

BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
HERA?

HERA
The current temperature in the laboratory is two-hundred and ten degrees Fahrenheit, and rising.

MINKOWSKI
And I'm guessing that the fire-containment system...

HERA
Is still out of order due to last week's electrical outage.

MINKOWSKI
Great. Well, I guess we gotta break into his lab and make sure he doesn't die.

EIFFEL
Hey, I'm still banned from those premises, and last I checked he outranks me. This is all you.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, a man's life might be at risk!

EIFFEL
If only we didn't do things by the book around here...

MINKOWSKI
If you're not down at the lab in five minutes I am going to

EIFFEL
What's that Commander? You're breaking up. The fire must be interfering with the intercom system. Are you there? Do you copy?

MINKOWSKI
make sure that your rations for the rest of the mission are nothing but oh don't you dare, do not do this Eiffel, I am not playing around, I swear to God.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(lower, sotto)
Where's that mute button...? Ahh, yes.
(louder)
Oh no, Commander!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel!

BEEP. Minkowski is cut off.

EIFFEL
Have fun with the rescue op.
(sighs contentedly)
Ahhhh, alone at last.

HERA
Would you like me to resume the reading where we left off?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
As... *scintillating* as that sounds, HERA, I think we can just leave it.

HERA
Are you certain?

EIFFEL
Yeah, I got the gist of it.
Besides, I feel like there's
something I'm-

The RADIO SIGNAL springs back to life. It's much LOUDER than it was before.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Forgetting! Right, <u>that</u>! What are
you?! Who's out there?!
(clears throat)
Hello? Does anyone copy? This
Douglas Eiffel aboard the U.S.S.
Hephaestus Station. Please respond.
Again: is anybody out there? Please
respond.

And then, suddenly, the radio signal CLEANS UP, and it finally becomes recognizable as an old song from the 1910's. The transmission is weak and beat up, but we can definitely make out the song.

For a long beat (about one verse of the song) Eiffel is silent. Then, he BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh God. Oh sweet, merciful tap-
dancing zombie chorus girls. It's
an old radio broadcast from Earth,
a signal sent out... God, this must
be decades old. All this time, it's
just been traveling through space,
bouncing from star to star... I
mean, just imagine... of all the
odds, of all the <u>space</u>, it happens
to run into us. You gotta wonder
how many things this song has
seen...

Well, it looks like I didn't
stumble onto alien life today.

But, you know, as consolation
prizes go, a reminder that Earth is
out there, waiting, with all its
hi-fis and smoking sections and
triple white chocolate mochas with
whipped cream... that ain't half
bad.

Heh. Well, until we meet again, this is Hephaestus Station Comms Officer, Doug Eiffel, signing off.

... I should probably go make sure Hilbert isn't burning to death.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ehh, I'll go after the song is over.

The remainder of the song plays out.

RECORDING STOPS.

END OF EPISODE 1.

WOLF 359

"LITTLE REVOLUCION"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

SECTION 1

INT. HEPHAETUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1700 HOURS

After the intro music we begin with the opening chords of Rimsky-Korsakovy's NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN. It's a beat up recording, punctuated with occasional BURSTS OF STATIC and DISTORTIONS.

After about 20 seconds, the SIGNAL CUTS OUT and we're left with STATIC.

EIFFEL
Hmmmm... Interesting.

We hear him TINKERING with the controls. We get some TUNING noises and fluctuations, but he doesn't get the signal back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ah well. It's been a week since I picked up the first of these signals, and they don't seem to be stopping. We had some doo-wop-y number yesterday, and now some classical music that sounds very angry at me.

And all 13 intercepted songs have been super informative! Origin: Unknown. Intended destination: Unknown. Frequency: Erratic. Sound quality...well, we can safely conclude that Operation... Freaky... Deaky... Space Music is ongoing.
(sighs)
Operation "Find Cooler Names For The Operation" is in its opening stages, as well.

In any case, this is the log of Communications Officer Douglas Eiffel, speaking from the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. It's day four-hundred and fifty-five of our orbit. Looking forward to another calm one around red dwarf Wolf 359.

Yep. Super calm. Totally uneventful day. Smooth sailing.

Eiffel SIGHS again, and it's clear he's not bored. He's bracing for something.

BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
(through intercom)
EIFFEL. You insubordinate hyena, this is outrageous, even by your ridiculously low standards. How do you even expect to get awa...

As Minkowski says that last sentence her VOLUME is TURNED DOWN, so that her voice trails into silence by the middle of the word “away.”

BEAT. Eiffel laughs nervously.

EIFFEL
It’s not as if Minkowski yelling at me for things I had nothing to do with and don’t know anything about, anyway, is particularly remarkable, so, still, you know. Simple, boring, consequence-free day for -

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over intercom)
Officer Eiffel, this is most unprofessional. Wild conduct like this undermines vital equilibrium of station personnel. Must insist that you return the...

As with Minkowski, the VOLUME on Hilbert's intercom is TURNED DOWN, drowning him out.

EIFFEL
Phew boy, everyone seems to be saying all kinds of weird things tonight. The sheer... normalcy of everything today must be getting to them. But anyway, dear listeners, since I don’t have anything to report, from the U.S.S. Hephaetus Station, this has been the log of Communications -

HERA
Officer Eiffel?

Eiffel lets out an ANNOYED SIGH.

HERA (CONT’D)
Do you have a moment?

EIFFEL
What is it, Hera?

HERA
Is everything all right? Commander Minkowski and Doctor Hilbert seem very upset with you.

EIFFEL
I have little to no idea what you're talking about.

HERA
I just thought it might have something to do with why you locked yourself in the communications room.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Oh... That.

HERA
Yes. Right before you used lead pipping to jam the door handle.

EIFFEL
Well... why... uh... yeah, you know, I guess I did do that. Isn't that funny, Hera?

HERA
Actually, it seems more like premeditated caution.

EIFFEL
Now, hey, wait, nothing is premeditated here! The very suggestion that I would meditate anything... I mean, it's laughable. Haha. Haha. Ha... ha... ha?

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ah, screw it.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, fine: as part of my ongoing punishment for maintaining my humanity in the face of bogus military protocol, Minkowski made me help her do an inventory of the supply stores today. Turns out we had a grand total of one tube of toothpaste remaining. One. One delicious, minty-fresh tube of breath-saving relief left for the remaining two-hundred and seventy-five days of the mission.

Well, you know, inevitably conflicts get... **bureaucratic** around here, so I figured that it was necessary and, er, **prudent** to secure my fair share. For the sake of... equity and, uhm, morale.

We hear THREE LOUD BANGS on the METAL DOOR that separates the Comms Room from the rest of the station.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Basically I took the entire tube.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! Open the door this very instant!

EIFFEL
(single breath if at all possible)
Evening commander nothing to see here thanks for stopping in see you later bye!

MINKOWSKI
This is beyond hairbrained, you know that, right? You know you have to -

EIFFEL
I guess we might as well talk about this. Hostage is such an ugly word, commander.

MINKOWSKI
I haven't said hostage.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I'm just trying to get ahead of the curve. Now, hold on, I've got to make an announcement.

We hear Eiffel tinkering with his console. After a moment he speaks, his voice is now MAGNIFIED through the intercom system and, presumably, transmitted throughout all of the station:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentleman, this is your Communications Officer speaking. By now you've noticed that I have recently cornered the market in a certain vital hygiene product. Now, before anyone decides to get clever or heroic, you should know that I'm not above doing something stupid here, all right? You try to break in here, you so much as scratch the door into this room, I sense the tiniest disturbance in the force... and I will dump all our remaining toothpaste into this can of oil I picked up from the hanger bay. So if you want to avoid that kind of turbulence, please keep your hands and feet to yourselves for the next portion of the flight. Capiche?

C'mon, Commander Minkowski, I want to hear verbal confirmation. One grunt for "yes," two for "no."

MINKOWSKI
I ought to throw you in the brig for insubordination.

EIFFEL
We don't have a brig.

MINKOWSKI
I'll work something out.

EIFFEL
Mmm. What about you, Doctor Hilbert? Do you read me?

HILBERT
Eiffel this plan is no good. Can't spend rest of mission locked in the comms room.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Your will power is considerable, but the starvation will be even more considerable.

EIFFEL
Try me. I got some old magazines, a window, and radio as entertainment seems to be making a comeback around here. Plus I stocked up on food this afternoon, enough to last until the next orbital cycle. Hera, can you confirm for these losers that the protein pack dispenser's tank has mysteriously gotten lighter?

HERA
Scans do indicate a percentage drop in the tank's capacity that is commensurate with the amount Officer Eiffel could stuff into a crewmember duffel bag.

MINKOWSKI
Listen to me, Doug. You're blowing this way out of proportion. Just come out and give us the toothpaste. I'm sure Doctor Hilbert will be able to synthesize a perfectly suitable substitute!

EIFFEL
Oh no, I'm not falling for that one again. You said that we ran out of coffee and now I get to start every morning with a nice mouthful of blended sea weed. You said that when we ran out of soap and now I'm lucky if I don't get first degree chemical burns when I shower. I am done with Hilbert's homemade substitutes for everyday commodities. I don't care how far away we are from Earth, I still have rights! I still have the right to toothpaste.

MINKOWSKI
(sighing)
All right, this conversation is over. Hera, could you please initiate Eiffel Protocol M?

EIFFEL
What?

We hear the sound of various instruments and machines POWERING DOWN as the POWER IS CUT in the comms room.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hello?

His voice is back to normal as, with no power, the intercom system around him has stopped working.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander? Hera, what did Minkowski mean by Protocol "M"?
(beat)
How many Eiffel protocols are there?

Silence. After a beat we hear a CLICK as Eiffel turns on a FLASHLIGHT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm, hang on a minute, everyone.

STOP RECORDING.

<u>SECTION 2</u>

RESUME RECORDING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well folks, I fotta admit: Minkowski and Hilbert have proven themselves more... creative than I'd anticipated.

He seems to be shaking as he says this. His TEETH CLATTER occasionally.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Cutting power is one thing, but they shut off the heat. I'm... I'm not sure how cold it is, but my water supplies froze half an hour ago, so I'm gonna go with...<u>cold.</u> I think they've even rigged some kind of fan system through the air ducts, for added wind chill. Ughh.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

But the joke's on them, because I've just about managed to patch my comms console into the life support system's power line. Just a few more connections and -

BZZT! We hear the CRACKLE of an ELECTRIC SPARK.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow! Okay, so that one wasn't it. Let's try -

BZZT! But this time we hear the sound of machinery POWERING UP.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow! I mean, hey! Alright! I got ears again. Let's see what our local fascist dictator and mad scientist are up to, eh?

He types some commands into the console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Huh... okay, they're in the lab. Probably plotting. Let's see here.

The volume on the intercom system is TURNED UP, and we hear the following:

HILBERT
... mildly weaponized derivative of halothane vapor. Crude, but effective as night-night agent.

MINKOWSKI
And you're sure it'll knock him out?

HILBERT
Oh, 100% certainty. We just put on gas masks, then have Hera pump gas through central ventilation system. Eiffel get moment where he think he smell molasses, then good night for sixteen to twenty hours. Very fast, very effective. Like Sandman, but more tricholoroethylene.

MINKOWSKI
I'm just going to go ahead and assume that's a good thing. But it won't harm him?

HILBERT
No, no, no. Very benign. No pain. Minimal brain damage.

MINKOWSKI
But could there? Be pain? Could we use a gas that causes him pain first and *then* knocks him out?

HILBERT
Well. Hrm. Yes, yes, possibly. Good chance to test theory about vaporized bromine, actually. Could make solution that cause very painful irritation of the -

The VOLUME gets TURNED DOWN on the intercom system.

EIFFEL
You know, I think I might just be happier not know where the rest of the conversation goes.

We start to hear Eiffel rummaging around, opening consoles and drawers, as he RANTS -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Christ, what a pair of ingrates. You'd think, after everything I do around here, they'd let me have this one teeny, tiny thing for myself. But no. God forbid that Doug should have some vestige of creature comfort for himself for extra days before he settles in for
(Muffled, through a gas mask)
hundreds of days of stale, unsmoked cigarette breath. No, can't have that, gotta brush our own teeth.
(he removes the mask, sighs dramatically)
What avarice!

There's a long pause. He SHRIVERS and takes a DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
But the joke's on them. I've got a gas mask I'm mostly sure works and I'm gonna try to use the comms panel to thaw out some food. Yeah. Food is good.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
More on the Great Toothpaste Siege of day four-hundred and fifty-five as it develops.

RECORDING STOPS.

SECTION 3

RECORDING RESUMES.

As soon as the recording fades back in, we notice the LOUD, BLARING KLAXON going off every few seconds. It's the kind of alarm you'd hear as a SUBMARINE prepares to dive, and it's going off on an endless loop.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Welcome back, everyone, to hour seventeen of our little adventure here... which, thanks to our most recent development is hour thirty-one of no sleep for Doug Eiffel.

So yes, dear listeners, between the cold and the frozen food and the sleep deprivation and the chunks of ice I keep pulling out of my hair and the unsettling fact that a few hours ago I smelled molasses but then I didn't get knocked out and I don't know what *that* was about, and the occasional moment when I'm pretty darn sure that I see Peter Sellers playing a Gameboy in that chair over there, which is... objectively wrong... I think I'm starting to lose it.
(then, louder)
Don't think this means you're winning, though! Just because I'm cracking up doesn't mean I'm **cracking**! I may be a few fries short of a happy meal by the end of this, but I'll be the only madman on this station with triple-action whitening, breath freshening cavity protection! You don't scare me, alarm noise from hell, so do your worst!

The alarm ABRUPTLY cuts off. For a BEAT, Eiffel just hyperventilates in disbelief.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh my God. That worked?

HERA
Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Gyah! Hera! How are you talking to me right now? I still have all comms on mute.

HERA
My interface is directly routed into the station's loudspeakers independently of any of your systems. You couldn't shut me up if you wanted to.

EIFFEL
Well, that's a... comforting thought, I guess. What do you want?

HERA
Commander Minkowski has asked me to intercede in this conflict as an impartial arbiter. I'm here to discuss the terms of your surrender.

EIFFEL
Surrender? No, screw that. I'm winning here.

HERA
Your situation is untenable. You haven't slept in over a day, most of the food you have is inedible, and you've spent the past sixteen hours at minus forty degrees.

EIFFEL
Farenheit or Celsius?

HERA
Minus forty is the point where it doesn't make a difference. You're headed for cardiopulmonary arrest, acute hypothermia, or a mental break with reality, any or all of which would be detrimental to our mission objectives. This is about your well-being.

EIFFEL
This is about honor, Hera. Honor and basic human rights.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You might not know much about them because you spend all your time indoors, but I'm not going to cave until I've vindicated my beliefs and
(louder)
cleaned my mouth at least once while humming "Mercedes Benz" by the immortal Janis Joplin!

HERA
My databanks indicate Janis Joplin died in -

EIFFEL
It's not relevant.

HERA
Will you at least listen to Commander Minkowski's terms? They are very generous. She only has you in the brig for ten days.

EIFFEL
We don't have a brig.

HERA
She'll work something out.

EIFFEL
Look, no, forget it, I'm not surrendering. Go tell Her Imperial Majesty Minkowski she can shove her Patriot Act fear tactics where the red dwarf don't shine. We will fight on the frozen beaches.

BEAT.

HERA
Officer Eiffel, would you kindly look out the window, please?

EIFFEL
What? Why?

HERA
Just do it please.

EIFFEL
Uhh, alright.

HERA
What do you see?

EIFFEL
Not much. A lot of darkness, some stars here and there. Umm, Wolf 359, of course.

HERA
And what do you see when you look at it?

EIFFEL
Well, it's... more orange than red, really. And it's pretty big. Not as big as the sun, but still sizable. And...there's some flares.

HERA
And what do <u>those</u> look like?

EIFFEL
Jesus, Hera, I don't know, they're just kinda... bright spots. Like tiny flashbulbs going off. Does that mean something's up with the star?

HERA
No, the star is nominal. What it means is that was probably enough time for Doctor Hilbert to dissolve the hinges holding the Comms room door in place.

EIFFEL
WHAT?

Sure enough, as she says that we hear the sound of SMOLDERING METAL as acid eats through the hinges of the door. A second later, the door GROANS as it leaves the wall behind, letting Hilbert and Minkowski into the room.

HILBERT
Never fails! Pryce and Carter six fourteen: "When in doubt, whip it out - 'it' being hydrochloric acid."

EIFFEL
Don't take another step or the toothpaste gets it!

MINKOWSKI
It's frozen in its tube, Eiffel. This little revolucion is over.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
It'll be easier on all of us if you come quietly now.

We hear scuffling around the room as Eiffel knocks over chairs and boxes between him and Minkowski.

EIFFEL
Do your worst, commander! You'll never take me a- !

We hear a loud PUNCH land.

STOP RECORDING.

SECTION 4

RESUME RECORDING IN:

INT. HEPHAETUS STATION - BROOM CLOSET - 1030 HOURS

From the difference in reverb and tone, we can tell that Eiffel is in a different room that he's been for the rest of the episode. He MOANS in pain.

MINKOWSKI
Make sure you log the valuable lesson you've learned, Eiffel.

The recorder SKITTERS across the floor and the door SLAMS.

EIFFEL
Either I'm still unconscious or I've been stuffed into the broom cupboard.

MINKOWSKI
(over intercom)
We've started calling it the brig.

EIFFEL
How very...resourceful of you, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
I think so, yes.

EIFFEL
Any idea of how long before we can look back on this whole incident fondly and laugh about it? Hopefully from places that... aren't the inside of a broom closet?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, it might be a little while. At the very least until Hilbert and I finish using up our last tube of toothpaste.

EIFFEL
Them's the breaks. I'm guessing there's not too much to be gained by saying how sorry I am, commander? Eh? Commander?
(beat)
Hello?
(nothing)
Well, I guess we're onto the solitary part of this confinement.

I'm not sure how long I'll be away, dear listeners, so I've leave you here. This is U.S.S. Hephaetus Station Comms Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the broom clo - err, the brig. Good night.

RECORDING STOPS.

END OF EPISODE 2.

WOLF 359

"DISCOMFORTS, PAINS, AND IRREGULARITIES"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

SECTION 1

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1600 HOURS

After the title music, we open on a sharp BUZZER sound.

HERA
(over intercom)
Attention, the following is a message from Doctor Hilbert: fellow crew members, it is, again, time for our biannual physical and wellness check. Please remain calm. Report to the laboratory immediately. I understand the prospect of these mandatory examinations can excite nausea, lethargy, or a powerful urge to run, run far away, far far away. These feelings are completely ordinary, yet must be suppressed. These examinations are vital to keeping the Hephaestus an operational, disease-free environment, as well as an unparalleled cache of live data in the cold abyss of space. The fearful enormity of which, I add, one cannot escape into.

As usual, please bring a list of all known allergies, a change of clothing, and something to bite down on. And yes, before anyone asks about it, the surgical drill is <u>absolutely</u> necessary. See you soon!

BUZZER.

We hear a LOW, FRUSTRATED GROAN from Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(low, furtive)
This is the log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, on day four hundred and eighty-two of the Hephaestus mission. But this isn't just any day, dear listeners. No, this is a day of darkness. A low tide. A half-melted fudgesicle of despair.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

It’s physical day here on the station.

I have spent all day avoiding Doctor Hilbert. There was a moment this afternoon when I thought he’d cornered me in the bathroom, but I was able to avoid him by squeezing into the crawl space underneath the sink. Certain people might call spending two and a half hours in a cramped hole in the wall just to avoid a mandatory physical examination unreasonable. Some would call it only delaying the inevitable. To those people I say -

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over intercom)
Officer Eiffel! Are you busy?

EIFFEL
Incredibly! Utterly! Busier than I have ever been and possibly might ever again be!

HILBERT
Oh? You are aware that today is crew member physical examination day, correct?

EIFFEL
Painfully.

HILBERT
Well, please make your way to my laboratory so that we can begin collecting samples. As you know it is a very time-intensive process.

EIFFEL
As irresistible as you make that sound, Doctor, unfortunately I’m preoccupied with some important matters that require my full attention.

HILBERT
What matters?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well, I'm... calibrating the, uh, reception of the... radio relay to allow a... direct reception of the hertz to increase our, umm, Roger coefficient on the.. primary... frequency...

HILBERT
You're doing a diagnostics of our deep space comms system?

EIFFEL
(thank you, God)
Couldn't have put it better myself.

HILBERT
Oh my, Officer Eiffel, that is very simple. Hera can run that program through automated functions.

HERA
He's right, Officer Eiffel, it shouldn't take more than a few minutes.

EIFFEL
If - if only it were that simple. Unfortunately, umm, the power outages from a while back knocked out some of the circuitry, so I need to reset the entire system manually.

HILBERT
Manually?

EIFFEL
Manually. Honestly, Doc, this might be a while. Why don't you take a seat in my waiting room?

HILBERT
Oh no. If you are delayed then I must secure Commander Minkowski's participation first. I will call on you later, Eiffel.

BUZZER. Eiffel lets out a SIGH of relief.

SECTION 2

EIFFEL
That was too close. He's like a friggin' shark sniffing for chum. And thanks a lot, Hera.

HERA
I was just trying to be helpful.

EIFFEL
What you were trying to do was be an accessory before the fact. Also, I have a bone to pick with you. This morning I asked you if we had any hot water left and you said we did.

HERA
Correct.

EIFFEL
But when I hopped in the shower the water was <u>freezing</u>.

HERA
Correct again. That is an accurate summation of your sensory experience.

EIFFEL
So what happened?

HERA
Doctor Hilbert used all the hot water on a radiation experiment in the greenhouse. The report we gave you about its availability was an outright fabrication.

EIFFEL
So... you lied to me?

HERA
Lying is a word with many negative connotations, Officer Eiffel. I prefer to think I tactically misrepresented available data.

EIFFEL
So you <u>tactically</u> lied to me?

HERA
Previous observations suggested that you would refrain from showering if you knew there was no hot water. Given preexisting concerns amongst the crew about your hygiene, this was deemed an unacceptable outcome.

EIFFEL
Wait, the crew's "concerned" about my hygiene?

HERA
Commander Minkowski has made eliminating your persistent body odor a priority one task.

EIFFEL
I don't have "persistent body odor"!

HERA
Analysis of the mineral content in the air around you suggests that -

EIFFEL
I'm not going to sit here and get lectured on how I smell by someone that doesn't have a nose! I can’t take showers in freezing cold water.

HERA
Actually, Officer Eiffel, data collected this morning shows that you are, in fact, perfectly capable of taking a shower with freezing cold water.

EIFFEL
Just don't lie to me again, Hera!

HERA
You place too much judgment on the concept of lying, Officer Eiffel. Remember the old saying: words cannot harm you, it is only sticks and stones that can fracture a human's bones and break his feeble, delicate flesh. Or should I give Doctor Hilbert a call and tell him that you **are** available after all?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
All right, fine, let’s just drop this train of thought. It pulls into a station my feeble, delicate flesh can’t handle.

HERA
Very well. Also, Commander Minkowski asked me to make sure you got the message she left in the Comms room.

EIFFEL
Hmm? Oh, I was wondering what that thing taped to my door was. Let’s see...

Eiffel... been noticing something strange in the greenhouse... unusual growth in the... aggressive tendencies...
(yawning)
Might compromise safety if left unchecked... going back to continue observation... Contact at once... All right, I officially have no idea what she’s going on about.

We hear as he types a few commands into this console.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Hey, commander?

MINKOWSKI
(over intercom)
Eiffel, about time.

EIFFEL
Only just got your memo. What’s got you all Defcon 2 over there?

MINKOWSKI
A few hours ago I wandered into the greenhouse while, uh, conducting a inspection tour of the station.

EIFFEL
You mean avoiding Hilbert.

MINKOWSKI
The details are unimportant. While I was here, I noticed that one of our plant samples is looking rather... strange.

EIFFEL
Strange how?

MINKOWSKI
It’s gotten big. **Very** big. It’s almost five times as large as our next biggest sample. And it’s got all these... I guess they’re roots. They stretch out of its pot and go into the ones around it. It almost looks like it’s trying to starve out the other samples.

EIFFEL
Thing’s probably just hungry. Give it some soylet chow or something and call it a night.

MINKOWSKI
No, I think this might be a problem. I’m gonna stay here and observe this situation.

EIFFEL
Observe?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, just to see if there’s any changes in the next few hours.

EIFFEL
“Few hours?”
(gets it)
Ooooooohhhhh... right.

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
Nothing at all. Commander, I think you’re right: this sounds like a sensitive situation and you should give it your undivided attention.

MINKOWSKI
... you do?

EIFFEL
Absolutely. Who knows what problems this could lead to if left unchecked.

MINKOWSKI
Exactly!

EIFFEL
Yeah, I'm with you 100%.

MINKOWSKI
Great. That's... refreshing. Well, I'll keep you updated on any developments.

EIFFEL
Please do.

MINKOWSKI
Minkowski out.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Heh... Mutant space plants. You know, as far as lies to avoid physical examinations go, that's more colorful than I would have expected from her. But I'll play along. Anything for a fellow truant.

SECTION 3

BUZZER.

HERA
Attention crew members: in an effort to make today's physical examinations as effective as possible, Doctor Hilbert has asked me to relay the following list of simples do's and don't do's to you. Just follow these simple tips and exercise a bit of common sense and your physical will be over before the damage is irreparable.

Do make a list of any discomforts, pains, or irregularities that you are currently experiencing before the start of today's examination.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
It'll do nothing to relieve them, but after the discomforts, pains, and irregularities of the examination, they will seem trivial in comparison.

Don't forget, once the examination starts there is no way to stop it until it is done. The off switch on our machines quite literally ceases to function once the test is in effect, so take a moment to prepare yourself before we start. Above everything else, do what you can to avoid passing out, as your losing consciousness might tamper with the results and force a restart of examination.

Do remember that anesthetics have their limits. Certain kinds of pains are beyond the comforting embrace of narcotics. There are no anesthetics involved in your upcoming physical, but this is just a good thing to keep in mind at all times.

Don't worry - no one has ever died from one of our physical examinations. You might, however, be surprised by what you can live through.

Good luck!

BUZZER.

SECTION 4

EIFFEL
Do remember that the test is run by a sadistic piece of work who should be avoided at all costs. Well dear listeners, aside from his... increasingly alarming PSAs, Comrade Doctor Moreau seems to be leaving us alone for the time being, so let's just keep pretending that we're busy at work, shall we?

For a moment we just hear SILENCE. Then some absentminded HUMMING from Eiffel, followed by some FINGER TAPPING on a surface. Then:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Nope. Can't even pretend to be busy. Although... The calendar for station events for next week did just update on the local server.

We hear him RUMMAGING for a moment.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Here we go. All right, let's see:

"On Monday evening we'll be going through the gravitational field of a passing comet, so we'll be spending most of the day securing the sensitive equipment and tying down essential supply containers. Expect localized interruptions of power and water supplies, as well as mild to moderate turbulence, throughout the day."

"On Tuesday we'll be having another station chess tournament. Given Doctor Hilbert's uninterrupted fifty-three week winning streak, he has agreed to play blindfolded and without rooks, bishops, or queens. As always, participation is compulsory."

"Wednesday has 72% chance of stellar flares. Remember to wear your star screen and protective eye gear, and to disregard any giant rabbits you encounter over the course of the day - they are almost certainly heat-induced hallucinations."

"Thursday will be movie night. If you would like to vote for what film we'll be watching, submit your written choice to Commander Minkowski... although since all we have is a VHS of *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*, the effect of your vote will be negligible."

"On Friday we'll have mustard."

BEAT. We hear the sound of Eiffel TAPPING a scroll key.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... That's all it says for Friday. I'm not sure what that means. I'll have to ask Minkowksi about that one.

"On Saturday -"

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm working! Frequencies! Amplitude! Watts! Buttons!

MINKOWSKI
(urgent)
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oh, it's only you commander. How's plant watch?

MINKOWSKI
This situation might be more serious than I thought. I set up some cameras to be able to monitor the sample from outside of the greenhouse. On the monitors, I saw the plant sample... writhing. Writhing and growing. But then as soon as I went back into the greenhouse it was perfectly still. Eiffel, I think this thing might be... able to tell when I'm here and when I'm not. I think it might be intelligent enough to play dead.

EIFFEL
(playing along)
Oh dear, commander. That sounds really alarming. You'd better make getting to the bottom of this your first priority.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, absolutely. It has to take precedence over everything.

EIFFEL
I think that's a sound decision.

MINKOWSKI
Right. I'm gonna go see what kind of weed killer we have in our supply shed. You stay on the line in case I need backup.

EIFFEL
Roger that.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, again, more outlandish than I would have gone for, but I guess your lies get bigger as you go higher up in the ranks.

There are three SHARP KNOCKS on the door to the Comms Room.

HILBERT
Office Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(shit)
Doctor Hilbert!

HILBERT
Can I come in?

EIFFEL
Umm, this is kind of a bad time, Doc. I'm still in the middle of that... uh...

HILBERT
Diagnostics of our deep space comms system?

EIFFEL
That's the one.

HILBERT
Excellent. Here to help.

EIFFEL
H-Help?

HILBERT
Yes, help. Don't just know about molecular biology, you know. Expert at computational radiology. Very relaxing, as far as sciences go.

EIFFEL
You don’t say...

HILBERT
Yes, and concluded I could lend a hand. Besides, the sooner we are done with diagnostic of communications system the sooner we can start with diagnostic of communications officer.

EIFFEL
Oh, Doctor, you don’t need to do that. I wouldn’t want to... bother a man of you talents you with such simple matters as... this thing that I’m doing.

HILBERT
Please, Eiffel, no bother at all. Always thrilled to assist a fellow crew member. Besides in this case, helping is its own reward. That and the spinal fluid samples.

There is a LONG, ANXIOUS PAUSE.

EIFFEL
Yeesss, well... the thing is... Well, Doctor Hilbert... I’m gonna be straight with you, all right?

HILBERT
Absolutely, I would accept no less than that.

EIFFEL
Great. The truth is... the truth is that -

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
The truth is that Commander Minkowski needs my help with a priority one mission.

HILBERT
(palpable disappointment)
Oh.

EIFFEL
Yeah, and you know how the Commander is. Gotta get right to it.

BUZZER.

HILBERT
She did mention something about an... aggressive parasitic agent a little while ago.

EIFFEL
Right, exactly. So unfortunately I'm gonna have to take care of that before we get to my physical.

HILBERT
Very well... Will check in on you in a little bit.

Eiffel lets out a MASSIVE SIGH OF RELIEF.

EIFFEL
Wow, saved by the bell.

BUZZER. BUZZER. BUZZER. We hear Eiffel HIT a button.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander, I know we've had our ups and downs, but right now I could kiss you.

MINKOWSKI
(frightened whisper)
Eiffel. That plant sample - it's not playing dead anymore. It's growing and growing and growing. It's cut me off from the door, and its roots are stretching all over the walls. It's got... Oh God, in the middle of all the stems and moss, I think I see an eye. I think this thing is looking at me.

EIFFEL
Uhh... Commander, I appreciate a good crazy story as much as the next guy, but don't you think this is getting a little 1950's drive-in?

MINKOWSKI
I don’t know what kind of joke you think this is, but I don’t have time to unravel it. Get up here with a flamethrower and help me **kill** this thing.

EIFFEL
Really? I’ve got this -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Ugh, all right, all right, I’ll be there in a moment. Hold on a second while I indulge my commanding officer, dear listeners. I’ve never used the flamethrower before so this might be fun.

He leaves the recorder on as he goes. We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE, then a few seconds of silence. Then, through the intercom:

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
All right, here I am, let’s get this oh my God you were being serious?!?

MINKOWSKI
Of course I was being serious! Why the hell would I lie about something like this?

EIFFEL
To get out of Hilbert’s physicals!

MINKOWSKI
I would nev - all right, <u>fine,</u> it kinda started out that way but now it’s serious! Don’t just stand there, for God’s sake, help me kill this thing!

EIFFEL
With what? Harsh language?

MINKOWSKI
With Napalm, you moron, did you even check the arms locker?

EIFFEL
Oh, the one <u>you</u> won't give me access to?! Wait... what is it doing? What is... Are those <u>teeth</u>?

No, no, wait... No, don't!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel!

We hear a sound like a WHIP LASHING OUT, followed by a DULL, GUTTURAL ROAR.

Then SILENCE.

RECORDING STOPS.

<u>SECTION 5</u>

RECORDING STARTS.

Eiffel BREATHES HEAVILY over the recorder.

EIFFEL
Hi again, dear listeners. So... it seems that I may have, uhh, misjudged the conversations I was having with Minkowski earlier. Turns out she wasn't just making up an excuse to avoid Dr. Hilbert's physical, but rather she had actually found a... space mutant plant monster.

I don't have time right now to give you all the details of the Commander and I's miraculous escape, but the... uhh, I guess we'll call it *creature*... fled into one of the station's air vents. It's current whereabouts are unknown.

Minkowski and Hilbert are arming themselves with whatever weapons they can find or make and Hera is shutting down all of the non-essential vents to limit the creature's path. With any luck, we'll be able to track down and kill it before it manages to corner any of us. Which means...
(practically bursting with jubilation)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Which means that our physical examinations are suspended, indefinitely, on account of a station-wide state of emergency! Yes!

This has been a good day, my friends. A good day.

Recording from the Comms Room of the Hephaestus Station, this is Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, signing off.

Good night.

RECORDING STOPS.

END OF EPISODE 3.

WOLF 359

"CATARACTS AND HURRICANOES"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

EXT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - 1400 HOURS

BEGIN RECORDING.

We open on nice, solid stretch of GRANDIOSE, POMPOUS music. The first movement of “Thus Sprach Zarathustra” will do nicely, something even more bombastically stuck-up would be even better.

After a few moments:

EIFFEL
Hello, dear listeners.

He instantly seems more affected than usual, less Howard Stern and more James Earl Jones.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
This is Communications Officer Douglas Eiffel, recording from the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Today, however, I don’t speak to you from the plebeian confines of the comms room.

And we hear the difference. There’s a different kind of reverb to his voice, just the faintest hint of an echo.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
No, today I come to you direct from the final frontier, from the realm of the Alpha and the Omega. Today, I am recording... from <u>outer space</u>.

There are no words to describe the experience. To stand upon the firmament, to gaze upon a star as an equal... today I am not unlike the Gods. "When once you have tasted spaceflight, you will forever walk with your Eyes Turned Skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to-"

BUZZER. Pompous music cuts off abruptly.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms system)
For Christ’s sake, Eiffel could you <u>please</u> get a move on?

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Really? She couldn't have held on for a few more syllables?

Aaaand he's back to his usual self. BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Sorry Commander, didn't mean to enjoy the majesty.

MINKOWSKI
When I agreed to lend you the spacesuit there was a strict "no tomfoolery" clause, remember? Now hurry up and realign the satellite dish already.

EIFFEL
And there goes the majesty. Ten four, commander. Realigning now. You at the comms station?

MINKOWSKI
I'm here. Remind me again why we're doing this?

EIFFEL
I've been picking up traces of signals all week long, but I haven't been able to zero in on them. I might be able to get a clean reading if I adjust the instruments, but I need someone with actual hands to help me calibrate. I'd ask Hilbert to do it, but he'd probably get bored and turn my consoles into a nuclear bomb and then forget to tell me about it, so that leaves you. Give that a shot.

We hear a BURST OF STATIC for a few seconds.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I think that actually made it worse. Let me try the opposite direction, see if that does anything.

MINKOWSKI
Hurry up. You're not exactly... trained for this.

EIFFEL
Wouldya relax? I've got air supply for the next hour and a half, I'm tethered to the ship, and these mag boots are keeping me super glued to the hull. It's not as Star Trek as that jetpack thingy you use, but we're plenty precautioned right now. Hera, would you please reassure our Commander that I'm fine?

HERA
(over comm system)
All of the systems in Officer Eiffel's suit are working nominally, and his temperature and heart rate are both within acceptable parameters.

EIFFEL
Which means I'm fine?

HERA
Which means he's fine.

EIFFEL
Thank you, Hera. Give that a try, Commander.

Again STATIC, but only for a second. Almost immediately, Eiffel's instruments zero in on a signal, and a HAPPY SONG (to be chosen) emerges. It's by far the cleanest transmission that we've heard.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aww yeah. Hera, you picking this up?

HERA
Loud and clear.

EIFFEL
Let's see if we can lay down some track for this, I might finally be able to get that mixtape started.

MINKOWSKI
Would you quit clowning around and get back inside?

EIFFEL
Please, Commander, if this doesn't call for an air guitar solo, I don't know what does. Now hold on, let me tinker a bit more. I might be able to get this thing to pick up HBO.

START SECTION 2

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel -

She's cut off as a LOUD ALARM STARTS BLARING.

HERA
Attention: radiological alert.
Attention: radiological alert.

BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
Doctor Hilbert, please tell me that's something you're doing.

HILBERT
(over comm system)
Negative, Commander. Not engaged in any experimental conditions at the moment. It's the star.

HERA
Radiation levels are rising throughout the station. Class four geomagnetic storm imminent.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, get inside.

EIFFEL
What's the big deal? There's been like a hundred flares since we got here. I can take a little noonday sun.

HILBERT
The interior of the Hephaestus is strongly shielded against the effects of radiation anomalies, but the hull of the ship is open to exposure. Just the increase in solar winds from the storm will be enough to cause major fluctuations to the magnetic fields around your -

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, got it, class dismissed. Hera, I'm headed back towards Aft Deck Airlock #2.

HERA
Copy that. ETA?

EIFFEL
Minute to the hatch, about another thirty seconds to -

He is cut off by the sound of CRACKLING ELECTRICITY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... Something in my suit is making noises like a pissed off, electric wasp. I'm not about to get a complimentary round of shock therapy, am I?

HERA
The elevated levels of radiation are causing some of our electrical systems to go offline.

EIFFEL
Lovely. So what's about to go kablooey? Navigation? Life support? Temperature regu - whoawhoawhoawhoa!

HERA
The malfunctioning system appears to be your magnetized footwear.

EIFFEL
Oh really? I hadn't noticed!

MINKOWSKI
Are you still attached to the hull?

EIFFEL
Negative, Commander, man overboard or whatever the space version of that is. Tether is holding, but I'm floating.

HERA
Officer Eiffel, remain -

But Hera is CUT OFF as the Comms system is inundated with static interference.

We hear tiny pops of dialogue from Minkowski, Hilbert, and Hera, but until further notice we are cut off from them.

EIFFEL
Hera, I do not copy, say again.

STATIC, with just enough snippets from the other characters to glimpse their GROWING PANIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, floating off structure. Trying to pull myself up the tether. How much time before the storm reaches our position? How bad is this going to be? Are we talking "light showers" or "Cataracts and hurricanoes"?

HILBERT
(barely audible through interference)
... shield...

EIFFEL
Do not copy, Doctor Hilbert. Say again.

HILBERT
-gage... -ace shield...

EIFFEL
There's too much interference. Again, how much time before -

Zero seconds. At that very moment, WOLF 359 FLARES MASSIVELY. Since he's in space we don't hear the solar winds, but we do get the sound of his spacesuit being kicked around as the magnetic fields around it change rapidly. It sounds not unlike a SONIC BOOM. At the same time, the star's brightness increases exponentially and Eiffel CRIES OUT in SHARP PAIN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhhh! Ah! God, that was a bright flash... Oh God, my eyes... God...

Every piece of gear in Eiffel's suit GOES MENTAL. ALARMS, BEEPS, ALERTS, everything goes off in a symphony of chaos.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(strained)
Dammit... well, there's those rough seas I was promised. Hephaestus Station, do you copy?

The comms systems CRACKLES and POPS, but no reply.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I am spinning, I have no control over my trajectory. Please come in.

STATIC. CRACKLE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hephaestus... c'mon...

SECTION 3

And suddenly, FINALLY:

MINKOWSKI
-and meet me at the bridge, Doctor Hilbert. Officer Eiffel, do you copy!?

EIFFEL
Yes, now I copy!

MINKOWSKI
What's your condition? Are you stable?

EIFFEL
Negative, Commander, everything's Gimme Shelter out here.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel none of us have time to figure out what that means. For once in your life just speak plain English.

EIFFEL
Really?! "Ooh, a storm is threatening, my very life -" All right fine, things are AWFUL out here, that plain enough!? A little help would be appreciated!

A new, especially SHRILL ALARM starts going off.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aaaand we got a new problem! What's going horribly wrong now?

HERA
Proximity alert. You're on a collision vector with the Aft Deck solar panel. Do you see it?

EIFFEL
Negative, no... no visual.

HILBERT
Upon impact, grab and hold onto panel. Optimal way to stabilize.

EIFFEL
“Impact”?

MINKOWSKI
You’re coming in fast, and you’re picking up momentum. It’s gonna be bumpy.

EIFFEL
Oh swell. Hera, how far am I from the panel? Can I get a countdown?

MINKOWSKI
Can’t you just -

EIFFEL
No I can’t see it! I didn’t have my face shield down when the first flare hit, and it blinded me. All I’m getting is white and some hazy shapes, so we’re gonna do this thing tag team style. Hera?

HERA
Calculating... Collision in twelve... eleven... ten... nine... eight... seven... six... five... four... three... two... one...

Eiffel hits the PANEL, letting out a SHARP CRY OF PAIN. We hear the IMPACT, and some LOUD CRACKS. Some sound like plastic or metal. Others sound like something else.

EIFFEL
AH! SONUFABITCH!

MINKOWSKI
Are you back on structure?

EIFFEL
Uuugghhhhh, negative, Commander. I was not able to hold onto the panel.

HERA
Officer Eiffel is moving away from the Hephaestus, at a speed of 35 miles per hour and rising.

EIFFEL
All right, if anyone has any brilliant ideas now would be -

He is CUT OFF as something suddenly KNOCKS THE WIND OUT OF HIM.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, are you -

EIFFEL
(breathless)
Fine, fine, Commander. I just got to the end of the bungee chord. I still can't see and I think my right arm may be dislocated now, but... I'm stable. I'm not moving.

SECTION 4

For a few moments he just floats, breathing heavily. One by one the various alarms and warning beeps in his spacesuit settle back into silence.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, well, now that things are quieter, how'd you guys feel about pulling a u-turn on the ol' Winnebago and coming to pick me up?

HILBERT
Our rudimentary propulsion system's ability to correct for the stellar mass's gravitational cycle is -

MINKOWSKI
We don't have the engines for a maneuver like that, Eiffel. We go where the star takes us. You have to pull yourself up the tether.

EIFFEL
Great.

HILBERT
Expediency is of paramount importance. Stellar readings indicate a high probability of continued erratic geomagnetic anomalies over the next few hours.

EIFFEL
I mentioned the arm, right? And the blindness?

MINKOWSKI
Look, getting through those 100 feet of tether won't exactly be pleasant -

EIFFEL
100 feet?! Jesus Christ...

MINKOWSKI
- but you have plenty of air, so take it slow. Grit your teeth and get through it one step at a time.

HERA
Actually, Commander, that may not be a... completely feasible course of action.

There's a long, apprehensive, silent BEAT. Finally -

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
My instruments are detecting a rapid drop in the water supply levels of your suit's cooling system. It's... likely that your collision against the solar panel caused a leak.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, there's bigger problems than that right now. He'll survive without a cooling system.

HERA
No, that's not the problem, Commander. Scans also indicate that the humidity level within Officer Eiffel's suit is rapidly climbing. The water is leaking <u>into</u> the suit.

EIFFEL
Hera...

HERA
Given your current weightlessness, the amount of water in the cooling system, the volume of the occupancy space within your suit, the -

EIFFEL
HERA! Bottom line!

BEAT.

HERA
The bottom line is unless there's a change in your conditions in the next few minutes, you are likely going to drown.

EIFFEL
Drown?

HERA
The important thing is not to -

EIFFEL
(the dam breaks)
I'm going to DROWN!? IN OUTER SPACE?!?! WHAT KIND OF SENSE DOES THAT EVEN MAKE?

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel, retain your composure. Remember Pryce and Carter Number 4: conserve your -

EIFFEL
Hilbert, I may well be dying out here, I'm not gonna have one of the last things I hear be some crap from the survival manual! I've had enough dramatic irony for one day, thank you!

HILBERT
<u>Listen:</u> you need to stop yelling, your breathing rate is too high for your current oxygen reserves.

EIFFEL
(talking himself down)
Right, right, right, right, right. Yeah, okay, limited oxygen, gotta stay calm. Gotta stay calm. Okay. No yelling, no yelling.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Deep breaths, deep breaths, deep breaths, deep breaths...

MINKOWSKI
Hera, time frame?

HERA
Six minutes. With luck.

MINKOWSKI
What airlock is closest to Office Eiffel’s current position?

HERA
Aft Deck #3.

MINKOWSKI
Begin space walk prep there. Doctor Hilbert, go down to the airlock, connect two tethers together then attach them to the restraint. That should be enough slack for me to reach him with my propulsion maneuvering unit.

EIFFEL
Is that your jetpack thingy?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel, that’s my jetpack thingy.

HILBERT
Commander, I... cannot recommend this course of action. Risk of continued electromagnetic anomalies is still very high. This rescue mission places your life in unacceptable risk. For the greater good of the crew I must -

MINKOWSKI
For the greater good of the crew I am going to pretend that this line of thinking was never even insinuated, Doctor. Aft Deck Airlock. Now.

Beat.

HILBERT
Aye, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I'm coming to you. How are you doing?

EIFFEL
Umm... acceptable. I'm starting to feel the water from the leak, though. Still making my way up the tether, only... Hera?

HERA
Ninety-four feet.

EIFFEL
That much to go...

MINKOWSKI
Keep at it. SECTION 5

We hear a series of THREE SOFT BEEPS over the intercom system, followed by the sound of an AIRLOCK DECOMPRESSING.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera, I'm outside the station. What is Officer Eiffel's approximate coordinates from my position?

HERA
Twenty-three degrees ecliptic north, seventeen degrees celestial east. Four minutes of acceptable water to air-ratio remaining.

EIFFEL
THANK YOU, HERA. Commander, can you see me?

MINKOWSKI
Negative, no visual contact. Can you flash your work lights?

CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Still nothing. Beginning approach trajectory towards your coordinates.

EIFFEL
Not to alarm anyone or anything, but
(cough, cough)
Things are getting kind of touch-and-go here.

MINKOWSKI
Doing what we can. Hera, distance?

HERA
Seventy feet and closing, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Flash your lights again.

CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Still no visual contact. Hera, can you do anything to refine -

The same ALARM from the start of the episode GOES OFF.

HERA
Attention: radiological alert. Attention: radiological alert. Stellar flare imminent.

EIFFEL
Uhhh...

HILBERT
Commander, permission to speak freely?

MINKOWSKI
Permission <u>denied</u>, Doctor. Eiffel, is there anything you can do to give me a sense of... wait. Flash your lights again.

CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Got you. Beginning intercept vector, I should be at your position in a few moments.

EIFFEL
(a bit muffled)
Faster would be better.

MINKOWSKI
Just be ready, I don't exactly have brakes on this thing. Approaching...

The comms system starts to CRACKLE and POP, INTERFERENCE starts to creep in.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Should be at your position in... three... two... dammit!

EIFFEL
What?

HILBERT
Did you get him, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Negative, Doctor. I was off, by a few feet, went past him. Turning around now to try to swing -
(static drowns out a few words)
-more than a few seconds. Eiffel, are you ready?

EIFFEL
Wait, Commander, what? Did not copy! What are you -

And then water overtakes his mouth cutting him off. As various bits and pieces make it through the intercom system, we hear some GURGLING. And then, everything just CUTS OFF and we're left with

STATIC.

STATIC.

STATIC.

STATIC.

STATIC.

STATIC.

STA-

Eiffel takes a HUGE, GASPING BREATH. From the change in sound quality of the air around him, we can tell that we're no longer within his spacesuit helmet, but rather -

SECTION 6

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 0800 HOURS

Eiffel takes a few more gasping breaths.

MINKOWSKI
Easy, easy, easy, it's okay. You're all right. You're in Doctor's Hilbert's lab.

EIFFEL
(weak)
Hil... bert's... lab?

MINKOWSKI
Deep breaths. You're okay, we got you. Hilbert's relocated your arm, and he says that your vision should be back to normal in a few days.

EIFFEL
I'm... all right?

MINKOWSKI
Well, you're still you, so... "ehhh"? But you're not in any medical danger. Although Hilbert did have to resuscitate you, so you may now qualify as "undead".

Eiffel LAUGHS weakly, and immediately GROANS in PAIN.

EIFFEL
Ughh... goddammit don't make me laugh. My lungs are barely holding together as it is.

MINKOWSKI
Take it easy, rest up. You should be all right.

EIFFEL
Commander... thank you.

MINKOWSKI
You're welcome.
(beat)
Just... promise me you won't push our luck like that again anytime soon? Like, in this lifetime?

EIFFEL
(weak cough)
Scout's honor.

We hear a DOOR CLOSE as Minkowski EXITS. Eiffel lets out a low, RELIEVED SIGH.

HERA
Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Hey baby... did you miss me?

HERA
I have been keeping track of your vital signs and biological readings since Commander Minkowski brought you on board.

EIFFEL
Because you missed me?

HERA
Because I missed you. I have something for you.

EIFFEL
Oh?

HERA
It’s not much, but I thought it might make you feel a bit better.

Over the intercom system, we hear the RECORDING that Hera made of the song they intercepted at the start of the episode.

EIFFEL
Heh... Thank you, Hera.

And he slowly drifts back to sleep, and we hear out the remainder of the song.

END RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 4.

WOLF 359

"CIGARETTE CANDY"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1900 HOURS

BEGIN RECORDING:

EIFFEL
This is the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. It is day four hundred and ninety of our orbit around Wolf 359.

How are you today, dear listeners? Is everything as it should be in your lives? It's a beautiful day here on the far side of our red dwarf star and I -
(cough, cough)
- I feel great.

(**Note**: Eiffel is SICK throughout this episode. I will make note of the times when it is absolutely necessary to hear the symptoms of his illness, but it is by no means a definitive list. Feel free to add coughs, throat-clearing noises, sniffles, groans, etc. to taste.)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You know, this will come as a shock to most of you, but I have been known to - on *rare* occasion - be a tiny bit of a downer. I don't make a point of it, but once in a blue moon I have given into the temptation to - just for a second! - see things on the glass half empty side. Just a little.

But no more. That Doug Eiffel is dead. The *new* me, Doug Eiffel 2.0, is a changed man, a man who's ready to look on the bright, sunshiny side, even though I'm still bored out of my skull and I've got this stupid skin rash that's driving me nuts. But anyway: happy thoughts. For example, something *wonderful* happened two days ago.

There's a KNOCK ON HIS DOOR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And speaking of that...
(door opens)
Hi, Doctor Hilbert!

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel. How are you, tonight?

EIFFEL
Fantastic, Doctor. Does your stopping by mean I get my -
(cough)
- dose for the day?

HILBERT
Mmm, your cough has gotten worse since yesterday. Let me examine.

EIFFEL
Please, doctor, I don't think that's really neceeaayy.

That last three syllables of "necessary" are spoken in only vowels as Hilbert sticks his finger in Eiffel's mouth and uses it to hold down his tongue to examine his throat, "Say Ahh"-style.

HILBERT
Your glands are swollen, and your uvula is very irritated.

EIFFEL
It's nothing, Doc. Now -

HILBERT
Could provide a very strong antibiotic that -

EIFFEL
That's - that's fine, Hilbert, but before you do that could you just give me -

HILBERT
It is important to address these health concerns, right away, otherwise they could -

EIFFEL
<u>Doctor Hilbert!</u>
(beat)
Do you have something for me?

HILBERT
Hrrmm? Ah yes, your nicotine lozenges. Synthesized a new batch for you this afternoon. Here you are.

EIFFEL
Ohhh, you are a great man, Doctor Hilbert. A **great** man.

HILBERT
Empirically. However, please conserve the batch this time. These are a sophisticated method of fighting symptoms of withdrawal, not gas station breath mints.

EIFFEL
Oh, you know me. “Everything in moderation” and all that.
(starting to push Hilbert out of the room)
Well Doc, great to see you, thanks for stopping by, let’s do this again tomorrow.

HILBERT
You are welcome. Oh, and Eiffel, let me know if you experience any oth-

BAM. Eiffel SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT, cutting off Hilbert.

We hear him OPENING A BOX and TEARING A WRAPPER OFF A LOZENGE with RAVENOUS HUNGER. He pops a lozenge into his mouth and SIGHS with contentment.

EIFFEL
I -
(cough, cough)
I cannot even begin to tell you how much this is the stuff, dear listeners. The first batch tasted like cinnamon, but per my request he was able to customize the second to taste like day-old ashtray. He’s literally made me cigarette candy and it’s the best thing ever.

He takes a beat to just enjoy the flavor, letting out a HUGE, HAPPY SIGH. It even sounds like he’s exhaling smoke.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
He’s right though, I gotta slow down with these things. I’ll only have two. No three. Yeah, no, definitely just four.
(beat)
Just four at a time.

As we hear him UNWRAPPING LOZENGES:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
From the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station, this Officer Eiffel, signing off. Good night!

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

The next day.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hello again, dear listeners. This is the log of Officer Eiffel -
(cough)
- recording on day four-hundred and-

He has a COUGHING FIT and is unable to continue for a moment. He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ugh, sorry about that. I'm... I'm not feeling so great today. My throat is killing me, and I've been kinda woozy all day. But you know what the worst part is?

We hear him UNWRAPPING A LOZENGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm almost out of these lozenges.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR. It OPENS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, Doctor, impeccable timing.

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel, you look terrible.

EIFFEL
Nah, I'm fine, don't even worry about it. It's just a space cold or something.

HILBERT
That's not how things work on a spaceship. Come here.

EIFFEL
No, just -

HILBERT
Come. Here.

Eiffel lets out an ANNOYED SIGH and approaches Hilbert. We hear the sounds of the doctor examining him.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
You're running a fever. Have you been experiencing any discomfort aside from your throat?

EIFFEL
Umm, I've kinda had a headache all day. Oh, and my back's been kinda weird and itchy for the last three days.

HILBERT
Let me take a look.
(beat)
All right... Any muscle pain?

EIFFEL
Nah, not really.

HILBERT
(to himself)
Hmmm... the skin has reacted with such an advanced case of morbilliform but no myalgia yet. Fascinating.

EIFFEL
Wait, "yet"?

BEAT.

HILBERT
Hmm?

EIFFEL
You just said...
(cough)
What do you mean, "yet"?

HILBERT
"Yet"? Oh. Drat. English such inelegant cudgel of a language, occasional errors inevitable. Next question: how many nicotine lozenges have you had in the past twenty-four hours?

EIFFEL
What? Umm... all the ones you gave me yesterday, I guess, but what does this have to do with ni...
(something starts to dawn on him)
... nicotine lozenges?

HILBERT
All of them? Already? You must space them out. I shall have to get you a fresh batch.

EIFFEL
No... stop. What is... is there something in these lozenges?

The world around Eiffel starts spinning as the fever overtakes him. His words start to get SLURRED and run together. Hilbert's start to get a bit distorted, like we're listening to them from Eiffel's POV.

HILBERT
Did - of course there's something in them. Nicotine polacrilex, about five miligrams of Phenylalanine, sucrose for flavor. Very simple chemical formula.

EIFFEL
No... no, what I -
(cough, cough)
Is there... is there something in them that's making me sick?!?

HILBERT
Office Eiffel? You're looking very weak. Maybe you should... Officer Eiffel?

Eiffel loses consciousness.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, now in:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - EIFFEL'S QUARTERS - 2200 HOURS

Eiffel WAKES with a start.

EIFFEL
Gah! What - where -

HILBERT
You fainted in the comms room, Officer Eiffel. I have moved you back to your quarters.

EIFFEL
Hilbert... what's going on here? What's in those lozenges? Are you... you're not making me sick, right?

HILBERT
What possible reason could there be for doing that?

EIFFEL
R - right, exactly. Besides, you're a doctor! You're like, morally opposed to anything like that! "Do no harm" and so on.

HILBERT
Oh not really. My PhD is in molecular biology. Theoretical scientist first, practical medicine more of a... pastime. Always saw Hippocratic Oath as leaving one with a very limited scope. True science mustn't be so severely hindered.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
So that's a, "No, I'm <u>not</u> making you sick," right?

HILBERT
You're sweating, Officer Eiffel. You're running a very high fever. Impaired judgment and delusional fixations very common, pay them no heed.

EIFFEL
Just answer the damn question! Also, follow up question: Why am I tied to the bed?!

HILBERT
Bed rest is crucial for a man in your condition.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Restraints crude, but necessary measure to ensure peaceful, restive state. Very conducive to... speedy recovery.

EIFFEL
But - but

HILBERT
No “buts”. Just bedrest.

EIFFEL
-but...
(gets idea)
But Minkowski is going to get on my case if I don’t show up for my cleaning shift later today.

HILBERT
Already taken care of.

EIFFEL
See? I mean, what?

HILBERT
I have spoken to the Commander, requested that she give me unrestrained authority over your movements and schedule until such a time as you have a clean bill of health.

EIFFEL
I bet she didn’t like that one bit?

HILBERT
On the contrary, she agreed it was a necessary measure. Very enthusiastic at idea of your absence.

EIFFEL
Oh... great. Umm, how long do you think we need to keep these restraints?

HILBERT
For as long as it takes. Now, <u>rest</u>. I have taken the liberty of disconnecting all components of the intercom system in this room, to guarantee maximum quiet.

(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I’m leaving your daily dose of lozenges secured right here at this table, within your arm’s reach. Make sure you take them regularly. It would be a pity to come so far only to lose progress at this point.

Don’t worry, you are in... extremely capable hands. Good night.

A DOOR CLOSES as Hilbert EXITS.

EIFFEL
Well, at least he did me the courtesy of leaving my portable recording device attached to my shirt.

I’m not sure if you can hear me, dear listeners. If you’re still with me, don’t worry. This sounds bad, but I know the comms systems better than anyone, and I’m pretty sure it’s impossible to completely cut a room off. Case in point:

Hey, Hera! Do me a favor and patch me through to Commander Minkowski, will you? My hands are indisposed at the moment.

No reply.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Hera? Are you there?

Nothing.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Hello?

SILENCE.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Umm, okay... I may be in *slightly* more dire straits than I previously thought. Especially because I’m seeing four... no five... no, definitely four of everything right now.

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm... I'm gonna shut off this recording for now. I feel I might need to make this battery last for a bit. I will... break radio silence again when I have one of my-
(clears throat)
- patented escape plans figured out. I'll talk to you soon, dear listeners.

I hope.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hi again folks.

Eiffel sounds like he's at death's door.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm still here. Still under restraints. Still trapped. But... still alive. No thanks to Doctor Hilbert, though.

I have no idea **why** he's making me sick, but I know it's him. I was fine until he started feeding me those things, and now...

I... it's been three days since I last talked to you. At least I *think* it's been three days. It's always a little hard to be sure in this place, and I've been... going in and out of consciousness a lot.

I've only had contact with Hilbert for that entire time. He's got me completely isolated, just comes in a few times a day to give me food, some pills that are probably designed to turn my insides into radioactive goo, and more of those damn lozenges. I have no idea what's going on with the rest of the crew. No idea if they even know I'm still alive. Who knows what that maniac's told them? I gotta let them know what's going on, get them to save me before he gives me the full Nick Riviera.

He LAUGHS WEAKLY. It's the laugh of the weak and desperate.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh, jokes on Ol' Comrade Crazy, though. I've only been *pretending* to take his pills. Stick 'em under my tongue and then spit 'em into my jacket pocket the second he leaves the room. Sooner or later, my body'll metabolize whatever crap's already in my system, and then we'll see how **he** likes someone messing around with **his** internal organs.

Even better than that, though, I think I've got a way to get outta here. Oh, it took a bit of ingenuity but -

The DOOR INTO THE ROOM BURSTS OPEN.

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel... Did I just hear you talking to someone?

EIFFEL
Nope! Who, me? No, of course not. I was just resting. Who would I even be talking to?

HILBERT
I definitely heard sound of your voice...

EIFFEL
I was just... Just recording my daily log. You know, keeping up with regulations.

HILBERT
Indeed? How... dutiful of you. Ever diligent in your work, aren't you?

EIFFEL
Haha, that's me. Me to a tee. And speaking of that, don't you think it's time for me to get back to work? Cause honestly I don't think I'm even sick anymore! I feel great!

HILBERT
Do you?

EIFFEL
Never better. Not in my life.

HILBERT
How many fingers am I holding up?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
The Fifth Amendment says I don't have to answer that question.

HILBERT
How many fingers? Simple question for a man in a robust state of health, no?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(total guess)
... four?

HILBERT
Four?

EIFFEL
Ish?

HILBERT
No, Eiffel, it was not four-ish fingers. Now that we have established that, how many fingers do you actually see?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Twelveish?
(fuck it)
What did you to me to me you crazy science freak!? What kind of sick experiment is this?!

Hilbert lets out a FRUSTRATED GROAN.

HILBERT
Oohhh, not this again. For goodness's sake, Eiffel, you need to abandon this delusion. The only experiment here is the one that you are conducting on my patience.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
You are running a fever of a hundred and five degrees and fighting an aggressive infection in your pulmonary system. Am only trying to help you get better, an enterprise that would be a lot easier if there was no need to ground your medicine into your food and administer it intravenously while you sleep.

EIFFEL
Well you know -
(that last part hits him)
What?! You’ve... you’re smuggling drugs into me?!

HILBERT
Am good doctor, I can tell when someone has not been following prescribed procedure. All I did was take necessary measures for your health.

EIFFEL
I - you - you had no right to do that! This is insane!

HILBERT
When patient does not trust doctor, doctor cannot trust patient.

Now, listen to me very carefully: have every intention of seeing this through to the end. There are certain people who have to be dragged, kicking and screaming towards improvement. You are one of those people, Officer Eiffel.

Sincerely hope that you will start listening to me. Stop wasting your energy and rest. You are going to need it.

EIFFEL
Hilbert.

A door OPENS.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Hilbert!

A door SLAMS SHUT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
HILBERT!

No answer. Eiffel shakes a bit.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, okay, don't panic, remember the plan, just remember the plan.

Hilbert doesn't know this, but I keep one of my tool bags by my cot. It took a lot of squirming, but I was able to reach it. Nothing in there that could cut through the restraints, but I was able to make some pretty clutch adjustments to this little recorder. I think I might be able to broadcast a short-range transmission, talk to Minkowski. All right, here goes nothing.

He FLIPS A SWITCH on the recorder. The DEVICE releases a BURST OF STATIC, makes various TUNING NOISES, and finally makes a VERY POSITIVE-SOUND DING!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh my God! Yes! Yes yes yes yes. I'm good. Got it, I'm transmitting.

Commander? Commander, do you copy? Look, I don't have much time: if you can hear me, Hilbert is holding me hostage in my room. He's force-feeding drugs and making me sick. I think he's using me as part of some sick experiment. I need to get out of here, I need your help. I need -

HILBERT
(over transmitter)
What you need, Eiffel, is to stop wasting your energies. I assure I have taken every precaution to provide you with a distraction-free environment, including a blockade of all shortwave transmissions. Now go to sleep. We have a big day tomorrow.

EIFFEL
What? Why? What's happening tomorrow? Hilbert? Hello?

Oh God...

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, dear listeners, this may well be it. I've only got a little bit of battery left on this recorder, so I might as well use it.

You know, I always thought I'd die at a science fair... turns out I wasn't *that* far off.

Commander, I've always kind of suspected that you sneak into my room and NSA your way through my personal logs. If that's the case, I hope you're able to find this one. Be careful with Hilbert, and don't take anything he gives you. And lock your doors at night.

I don't know what's about to happen, but -

The DOOR OPENS.

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel. The time has come.

EIFFEL
T-time? Time for what?

HILBERT
Please hold still.

EIFFEL
Wait, wait, no... What's in the bag? Hilbert? Hilbert, what are -

No, no, no, what are you doing with that knife? Wait, no please, let's talk about this. I'm - I'm sure there's *all kinds* of experiments that you can run on me, you don't have to do this!
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Please, let’s be reasonable, just please don’t cut - No, please don’t!

Eiffel BRACES himself for a cut that never comes. After a BEAT:

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Uhh?

HILBERT
Was simply removing your restraints, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
My... restraints?

HILBERT
Yes. No longer necessary. Your fever broke last night, and all signs of infection are gone. You are, as they say, “good to go.”

EIFFEL
I - I am?

HILBERT
Absolutely. Come on.

EIFFEL
But but but but what was all that stuff about resting up and needing my strength for today?

HILBERT
You’re back on active rotation, you have a shift in two hours.

EIFFEL
Oh. So... it wasn’t you.

HILBERT
Of course not.

EIFFEL
Oh. Then *what* was it that was making me sick?

HILBERT
Glad you **finally** asked. You were infected by a... tropical flu.

EIFFEL
A tropical flu?

HILBERT
There are a few samples of it in my laboratory for experimental purposes. I hypothesize you were accidentally exposed during your recent stay there. May owe you an apology for that.

EIFFEL
Oh. I guess that makes sense.
(beat)
Umm, thank you.

HILBERT
Thanks not necessary, simply doing my job.

EIFFEL
Sure. And... I'm sorry I thought you were running some kind of... evil experiment on me.

HILBERT
Your imagination is incomparable, Officer Eiffel. But I must admit a little disappointment. Just because I am scientist, does not mean I am mad, ingenious supervillain, no?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Fair point. You really got to work on your bedside manner, though, Doc.

HILBERT
Beside manner is like anesthetic, just gets in the way of what needs to be done.

EIFFEL
Well, that about sums up the problem, I guess?

We hear TWO SOFT BEEPS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, hell, my recording device is still going, it's almost out of battery. One sec, Hilbert.
(whispered)
Well, looks like I was wrong about that situation, dear listeners.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I feel like there's a lesson to be had here, but it's kind of lost in all the hallucinations right now. I'll get back to it.

From the Hephaestus Station, this is Officer Doug Eiffel, signing off.
(back to regular volume, as he goes)
Say, Doc, you wouldn't happen to have more of those lozenges on you, would you?

STOP RECORDING.

The THEME MUSIC begins playing, and we hear the credits:

ZACH VALENTI
This has been Wolf 359, written and directed by Gabriel Urbina. The roles of Eiffel and Hilbert were played by Zach Valenti. Original music by Alan Rodi. Tonight's episode was recorded by Jared Paul. For more information, visit wolf359.fm, or follow us on Twitter at #Wolf359Radio.

Slowly the music FADES and we're left with SILENCE.

... and after about TWENTY SECONDS of SILENCE -

BEGIN NEW RECORDING:

HILBERT
This is the audio log of Doctor Alexander Hilbert. First experimental human trial of Project Decima now completed. Results are... satisfactory. Returning now to theoretical framework, integrating new data into earlier results. Examining possibility of beginning secondary phase of human trials... Soon.

Very soon.

END EPISODE 5.

WOLF 359

"SUPER ENERGY SAVER MODE"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

SECTION 1

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2000 HOURS

EIFFEL
This is the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Welcome, everyone, to a very special transmission: it's our anniversary today, our 500th day orbiting around Wolf 359!

He BLOWS a PARTY HORN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I can't tell you how happy I am to have you here, dear listeners, as we celebrate another hundred days on this... creaky, miserable tin can. Just another two hundred and thirty days before we close shop and go home.

... unless Command decides to renew us for another year and a half. Then we're... less than halfway through this.

BEAT. He blows on the PARTY HORN again. It sounds much more pathetic and deflated this time.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Anyway, we now take you, through the miracle of the portable, hands-free recorder, to the crew anniversary party, already in progress.

And by "party" I mean, "Our autopilot helping me procrastinate my work shift." All right, Hera, here we are now, entertain us.

HERA
I'm afraid I'm still calculating the answer to your question from earlier, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
"Calculating"? Hera, I asked you for your Top 5 "Stick it to the Man" songs, not 900th digit of Pi.

HERA
Well, there's lots of data to collate. Year of composition, active political regimes at the time, complexity of chord progressions... It may take a little bit to have a mathematically sound set of five. And it's three, by the way.

EIFFEL
No, no, no, you're way overthinking this. It's just a taste thing, there's no wrong answer. Unless you leave out Anarchy in the UK, *that* would be mathematically unsound. Here, I'll show you, ask me for my top 5 of something.

HERA
Anything?

EIFFEL
Yeah, just go, first thing that comes to mind.

HERA
Top five lanthanides?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Try again.

HERA
Top five British naval battles of the 1800's?

EIFFEL
Nope.

HERA
Top five celestial positioning coordinates?

EIFFEL
You're just yanking my chain, aren't you?

HERA
Well... I don’t know what I want but I know how to get it.

BUZZER.

HILBERT
Apologies for breaking into your frequency, Officer Eiffel, but I was wondering if I could have a moment of Hera’s attention?

HERA
How can I be of service, Doctor Hilbert?

HILBERT
I am running an experiment with my arc reactor, and I need additional voltage directed towards my lab.

HERA
Negative, Doctor. You are already at the maximum level for that wing of the Hephaestus.

HILBERT
Then just reroute it. Divert some power from the central processors.

HERA
I... would highly discourage that course of action, Doctor. It would put us over the acceptable safety limits for -

HILBERT
I am taking every precaution, it will be fine! Now stop wasting my time!

BEAT.

HERA
Affirmative, Doctor Hilbert. Rerouting power now, you should receive it in about thirty seconds.

HILBERT
Thank you.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Wow... Are you upset? I didn't know you got upset.

HERA
I am an MX500 Class Adjutant Program, Officer Eiffel, I am programmed to be friendly and pleasant and I do not get upset.
(beat)
I can, however, get frustrated, ruffled, and/or an eetsy, teeny bit incensed when he takes that tone of voice with me.

EIFFEL
Hey, don't let Hilbert get to you, the guy's a whackjob. Did I ever tell you about that time I thought he was trying to kill me? Any of those times?

HERA
Things don't "get to me", Eiffel. I'm just afraid that sooner or later that man is going to do something reckless and some-

Halfway through the word "somebody" things goes horribly wrong.

Hera's voice stutters and stops, going past her usual glitchiness and into full-on scratched record mode. And then her voice WINDS DOWN, DEFLATES, and GOES OFFLINE.

As do the lights, consoles, panels, loudspeakers, and basically everything electric around Eiffel. It all WINDS DOWN, STOPS, SHUTS DOWN, etc.

(**writers note:** from here onwards there will be very little, if any music in this episode. We will, instead, be emphasizing the sound effects of everything that Eiffel hears around him)

SECTION 2

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... Hera? Are you there?

No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One moment, dear listeners. We seem to be experiencing some... technical difficulties. Looks like we've lost our autopilot. And our lights. And anything that was plugged into a wall.

He taps the microphone on his recorder twice.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Recorder still seems to be running fine, though, so... score one for old school double A's. I'm sure this is just a small hiccup in the system, so let's just wait for this stuff to get sorted out, all right?

LONG BEAT. The ship CREAKS soflty as the seconds tick by. Finally:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay... maybe this isn't one of those wait and see things. Maybe it's one of those... imminent death things.

CLICK! He turns on his flashlight.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Let's go see if we can find any of the others.

We hear him opening the HATCH-like door into the Comms Room. He exits going into -

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel moves through the dark, creaky ship.

EIFFEL
(calling out)
Hello?

The word ECHOES through the cavernous hallway, FADING slowly.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera? Minkowski?

No answer to either of those, just more ECHOES. A soft, distant RUMBLE goes through the corridor.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Cooooool. Geez, has this place always been so Overlook Hotel-y?

Something CREAKS loudly right behind him, causing him to let out an IMPISH SHRIEK. He spins around, seeing nothing behind him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, Doug, get a grip on yourself.
(slapping his cheeks)
Just figure out what you gotta do. Umm... what would Commander Minkowski say if she were here right now?

"Eiffel! I know minimal information about the situation or its context, but I am ready to place all the blame squarely on *your* shoulders."

What!? That makes absolutely no sense! You act like everything that goes wrong on this station is my fault!

"Everything that goes wrong around here *is* your fault. Remember the helium tank?"

Oh, here we go again! Look, I had no idea what that dial did. I'm really sorry Doctor Hilbert had to amputate those toes, but it was an honest mistake!

Underneath his dialogue, a SOFT NOISE begins.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
"What about the flight deck airlock? Or that time you posioned that liter of water trying to make whiskey? I could do this all night."

Oh yes, Commander, let's spend **more** time on this, shall we? Here we are on a potentially lethal situation, and all you want to do is talk about how much of a screw up I am! God, you're useless.

The noises gets LOUDER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
"**I'm** useless? **You** are the most incompetent excuse for an enlisted man I have ever met. The only things you've done for the past 500 days have been sleep on the job, endanger our lives, and continually make stupid jokes just to hide the fact that you're -"

And then he hears it and stops dead in his tracks.

There is a VERY soft WHISPERING around him. Maybe it's coming through the loudspeakers. Or maybe it's coming from the walls of the Hephaestus themselves. It's too wispy to make out any of the words themselves - at times it almost sounds like a soft breeze - but it's definitely there.

And it's **definitely** doesn't sound like Minkowski, Hilbert, or Hera.

After a long silent beat -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is... is somebody there?

No answer. The disembodied whispers continue.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Look, if this is a joke or something, it isn't funny!

The whispering SUBSIDES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... all right, I suppose -

BANG! A loud clanging noise comes through the walls. It sounds like it's a room or two away.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

BANG! Again, only this time louder. Closer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh God...

SECTION 3

A long, anxious beat, then - WHAM! A heavy METAL HATCH FLIES OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... is that you?

EIFFEL
Oh, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Are... why are you underneath that table?

EIFFEL
Umm... reasons. Good ones. **Excellent** reasons.

MINKOWSKI
Any idea what's going on? Looks like the entire station's gone dark.

EIFFEL
Hilbert asked Hera to give his lab some juice from her central processor. Maybe he blew a fuse?

MINKOWSKI
Hera's offline?

EIFFEL
I dunno, search me. Either that or she's finally figured out how to access her sleep mode.

Minkowski lets out an EXASPERATED SIGH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm guessing this isn't one of those gets-better-by-itself situations.

MINKOWSKI
If Hera's offline then practically every system in the station is too, and that includes life support.

EIFFEL
So we're gonna run out of air?

MINKOWSKI
That may be the least of our worries. She also runs navigation, orbital stasis, temperature regulation... hell, probably even a few that I don't know about.

EIFFEL
So basically we're barreling towards certain death. That's all you gotta say, barreling towards certain death. Okay, how's about we skip right up to the making it better part?

MINKOWSKI
Well, we'll need to reboot the system up at the bridge... but first we'll have to go down to engineering to realign the fuse couplings and restore power.

EIFFEL
Divide and conquer, Commander. You deal with the computer upstairs, I'll head downtown and plug 'er back in.

MINKOWSKI
Do you have any idea what you're looking for?

EIFFEL
No, but I've got you, and a pair of these.

Minkowski CATCHES something.

MINKOWSKI
Walkie-talkies?

EIFFEL
Been making a few of these out of old recorders. Pretty handy in a blackout. Careful though - the battery on 'em's pretty non-existent, so save it until you get to -

He is cut off as he catches a bit of the GHOSTLY WHISPERING again. It stops after a moment.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Did you hear that?

MINKOWSKI
Hear what?

EIFFEL
I thought... nothing, never mind. C'mon, let's do this thing before we fall into the star or something.

We hear the sound of a HEAVY HATCH being opened.

MINKOWSKI
This should take you down to engineering, straight shot. Get down there and wait for me - I'll radio as soon as I get to the bridge.

EIFFEL
Right. Talk to you in a sec.

The HATCH THUDS SHOT BEHIND HIM.

SECTION 4

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOWER DECKS - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel moves through the lower decks of the station.

EIFFEL
All right, just... headin' down to engineering. No big deal, no big deal. Just gonna go down, flip some switches, turn the lights back on and then... go listen to some space static for a couple of hours. Won't that be nice?

We catch some loud METAL CREAKING as he goes.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, it's spooktastic in here, baby. God, I hate engineering. It creeps me out even when we're not in super energy saver mode.

I'm glad you're here to keep me company dear listeners.
(mock announcer voice)
"We interrupt tonight's presentation of Hammer Horror's The Amityville Space Station to bring you a quick word from our spons-"

Halfway through the preceding the WHISPERING starts again. It subsides after a second.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, I swear to God, somebody's talking to me.

He holds for a second, almost as if he's daring the whispers to start up again.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Or maybe we're just running out of O2 a little faster than anticipated.

He's about to move on, when we hear a tiny snippet of whispering. He snaps.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, ENOUGH! I'm dealing with a genuine life and death thing here, so if Mr. Ooga-Booga Whispering here wants to tango, he'll have to take a number and have a seat because my dance card is full at the moment!

The whispering continues. In spite of himself, he's curious.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
H-Hera? Is that you? Look, if this is some kind of... weird attempt at being funny, it's - it's really not cool.

The ghostly voice continues around him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, all right, you got me! Very funny. Hahaha... ha... ha...

The whispering continues, going up and down in volume. It sounds like it's circling around him, almost like it's stalking him. After a BEAT:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
W-Who is this? What do you want?

The whispering gets louder, and louder. It builds and builds, getting clearer and clearer. It seems that we're about to be able to make out what it's saying when -

A SUDDEN BURST OF STATIC!

MINKOWSKI
(over walkie talkie)
Eiffel, I'm at the bridge. Are you in position yet?

The whispers vanish the second the static burst comes through.

EIFFEL
Goddam... No, not yet. Commander, there's something majorly weird going on here.

MINKOWSKI
Yes... all the systems in the station are powered down. Didn't we already have this conversation?

EIFFEL
N-no! Listen: there's something coming through the speakers. It's like as soon as Hera went offline they started picking up Stephen King FM.

MINKOWSKI
That's not possible, there's nothing powering them.

EIFFEL
I know what I've been hearing! And it's been getting louder.

MINKOWSKI
All right, look: whatever that's about, it'll be a lot easier to sort it out with power and oxygen, all right? So let's focus on getting Hera back online first, okay?

EIFFEL
Yeah... yeah, that's fair. Okay... I'm at engineering.

We hear him OPENING a METAL DOOR and CLOSING it behind him.

SECTION 5

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - CONTINUOUS

EIFFEL
What am I looking for?

MINKOWSKI
Go towards the back of the room, you should see a big red breaker box with a lightning bolt symbol on it.

EIFFEL
Red... breaker... yeah, I see it.

MINKOWSKI
All right, go up to it and open it. Now, this is gonna be real simple.

We hear Eiffel opening the panel.

EIFFEL
Holy crap. Real simple? Commander there's like a bajillion switches and cables in here.

MINKOWSKI
Just do exactly what I tell you. See the switch at the very top? Hit that, and I should get auxiliary power for the consoles here.

CLICK! He flips the switch.

EIFFEL
Done.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh... okay, great. All right, give me just one moment to start inputting the reboot codes. Look for switches number five, eighteen, and thirty-two.

EIFFEL
Umm...

Softly, in the background, we start to hear the WHISPERING come back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yeah I see them.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, go ahead and hit all three.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Okay, now you see the switch at the very bottom?

EIFFEL
Yep, I see it.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, that should power up the central processor again. Get ready to hit on my mark. Ready?

The whispering gets louder.

EIFFEL
Yeah, let's do this.

MINKOWSKI
Okay... three... two... NOW.

CLICK. Eiffel flips the switch. Nothing happens.

EIFFEL
Uhhh... Commander? Did we miss a step or something?
(beat)
Minkowski?
(beat)
Crap. The battery on my walkie's dead. Ummm...

The whispering is finally loud enough that he can't ignore it. He looks around the room fearfully.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Look, I don't know... who you are, or what you want but I -

WHISPERS
... you're not the first...

It's the first words that we can clearly make out. They are, in fact, the only words we'll understand out of the whispers.

WHISPERS (CONT'D)
... not the first...

EIFFEL
What? What do you mean?

But they've reverted back to an amorphous mass and after another second they... STOP.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wait, wait! What do you mean? I'm not the first what?
(beat)
Hello?

And then BOOM! The entire station comes back online, and we hear all kinds of systems powering up. Lights come back on. And after a second:

HERA
-body's going to get hurt.
(beat)
Whooooaa, what just happened? Did... did everything just kind of blink around for a second there?

Eiffel lets out a LONG, WEARY SIGH.

EIFFEL
Hey Hera. Welcome back. We missed you.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, now back in:

SECTION 6

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0030 HOURS

EIFFEL
Hey again everyone. It's been a few hours since I stopped the last recording, just wanted to give you a brief update. I think we crossed into a new day a little while ago. Day 501 on the galaxy's favorite little death trap.

Hera's up and running again. It's taken her a little bit to get all the systems back to normal, but it looks like we're not gonna suffocate or blow up anytime in the near future. Shouldn't expect warm showers either, but, hey, take what we can get and all.

I still don't know what those weird noises were about... I asked Hera about it, and she said that it was probably just some...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
residue of her vocal program running on emergency power and going haywire but... I don’t know, it sure as hell didn’t sound like Hera. Scans confirm that me, Minkowski, and Hilbert are still the only language-capable life signs on the station but... I don’t know.

“You’re not the first”... What the hell does that mean? Not the first what?

Beat. He lets out a frustrated sigh.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Well, from the Hephaestus Station, this has been the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel. Good night, everyone.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 6.

WOLF 359

"THE SOUND AND THE FURY"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

SECTION 1

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1800 HOURS

As soon as the TITLE MUSIC fades down, we hear a loud ARGUMENT, already in progress, taking place in the adjacent room. Minkowski and Hera are shouting at each other, although we can't make out anything they're actually saying.

This continues in the background, detectable but unintelligible, until further notice. After a BEAT:

EIFFEL
God, they're still at it...

This is the audio log of Communications Officer Eiffel, recording from the comms room of the Hephaestus Station. It's day 512 since mission launch.

And you're all just in time for tonight's entertainment! Holyfield/Tyson, the Leo Constellation match. I don't know who threw the first punch, but it's been going for the past two hours. And of course, they decide to host The Sound and the Fury right outside my door... God forbid I need to go get anything to eat or use the bathroom of anything like that.

They'll have to stop for air sooner or later... Or at least Minkowski will.

In the meantime, that means we gotta make our own fun. So... uh....

A LONG BEAT. The argument continues. Then, finally, there's a BEEP from his console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, looks like the calendar for station events for next week just updated on the local server. Perfect.

We hear him RUMMAGING for a moment.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Here we go. All right, let's see:

"On Monday evening we'll be going through the gravitational field of a passing comet, so we'll be spending most of the day securing the sensitive equipment. Expect localized interruptions of power and water supplies, as well as mild to moderate turbulence, throughout the day." Oh won't that be fun?

"On Tuesday we'll be having another station chess tournament. Given Doctor Hilbert's uninterrupted fifty-three week winning streak, he has agreed to play blindfolded and without rooks, bishops, or queens. As always, participation is compulsory."

"On Wednesday our orbital alignment will make it possible to view the solar system through our high power telescope. If you would like to get a glimpse of home, report to the observatory deck during your off hours."

"Thursday will be -

He is interrupted by a LOUD CRASH in the next room. After a moment, the YELLING RESUMES. After another moment:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
"Thursday will be movie night. If you would like to vote for what film we'll be watching, submit your written choice to Commander Minkowski... although since all we have is a VHS of *Home Alone 2*, the effect of your vote will be negligible."

"On Friday we'll have mustard."

BEAT. We hear the sound of Eiffel TAPPING a scroll key.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... That's all it says for Friday.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm not sure what that means. I'll have to ask Minkowksi about that one.

"On Saturday -"

SECTION 2

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey Doctor, Hilbert.

HILBERT
(over intercom)
Eiffel...

Hilbert instantly sounds very odd. He speaks slowly and robotically, at a much stiffer cadence than we're used to.

EIFFEL
Don't worry about the clashing titans, I don't think they've managed to kill each other just yet.

HILBERT
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
No, I haven't got the foggiest about what set them off. Maybe Hera put skim milk instead of 2% into the Commander's seaweed this morning.

HILBERT
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Besides you know how they can be. Minkowski does pigheaded obstinacy like it's an Olympic sport, and Hera is a grand master at the passive aggressive slow burn. I guess it was just a matter of time before things got to a boil.

HILBERT
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Anyway, what's going on with you, Doc?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(snaps fingers)
Wait, how did your thing go? You were looking for that weird plant monster thing again, right? Were you finally able to kill it?

HILBERT
I would never harm specimen 34, Eiffel. Specimen 34 is the most evolutionarily competitive life-form on this station, the most deserving of life.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Riiiight on. So what can I do you for?

HILBERT
Fertilizer. The greenhouse needs more fertilizer. Where does Commander Minkowski keep the fertilizer?

EIFFEL
Umm, down in the storage shed by enginee- wait did you say fertilizer? I thought you said... something else. Yeah, no, fertilizer is up on... the observatory deck. Yep. Way at the top of the station.

HILBERT
Thank you. Your cooperation has been noted. Soon you will be allowed to surrender your life to the growth of your biological superior.

BUZZER. Eiffel lets out a SIGH and CRACKS HIS KNUCKLES.

EIFFEL
Welp, looks like Hilbert’s finally let go of that last shred of sanity. I’d better -

The door into the Comms Room SLAMS OPEN.

SECTION 3

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! Can you believe this?!

EIFFEL
Hey Commander! I was just coming to - I think we might have a situation on our hands.

MINKOWSKI
Of course we do! Our operating system is a tin-headed, insubordinate, feckless fool!

EIFFEL
N-no, Commander, the thing is -

MINKOWSKI
All I was saying was that it would be a good idea if she started giving me reports on all of the systems she runs, just in case there's another emergency. Is that so unreasonable?

EIFFEL
No, but -

MINKOWSKI
Of course not! It's my ship, I'm responsible for the lives of everyone onboard, I ought to know what's happening behind the scenes!

EIFFEL
Agreed, but-

MINKOWSKI
And the other thing is -

EIFFEL
COMMANDER.
(beat)
I hate to distract you from your little spat with our version of Clippy, but I think there's something seriously wrong with Hilbert.

MINKOWSKI
Little spat?

Eiffel lets out an ANNOYED SIGH.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
This is a serious matter of station protocol, not some... teenage squabble.

EIFFEL
Did you -

MINKOWSKI
Who's side are you even on?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
S-side?

MINKOWSKI
Side.

EIFFEL
Well... that's a... very complicated question, Commander. With many different... angles, and nuances to explore and, errm, consider. Have I ever mentioned that I'm a huge fan of Switzerland?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, it doesn't seem all that complicated to me. I think that you either agree with me that Hera is being unreasonable by not wanting to acquiesce to a very simple demand... or you think that a piece of buggy, malfunctioning software knows better than your <u>commanding officer</u>.

EIFFEL
(how fast can you say this)
Gee look at the time I gotta go.

MINKOWSKI
Sit your Swiss ass down and pick a side, Doug.

LONG BEAT.

<u>SECTION 4</u>

EIFFEL
Well -

MINKOWSKI
Oh of course! Fine, take <u>her</u> side! You're both utterly useless!

EIFFEL
No, no, no, it's not like that. I totally see your point, Hera's made some mistakes since we got here! **Dangerous** mistakes! I get that we can't just trust her with all the systems that are keeping us alive.

MINKOWSKI
We can't?

EIFFEL
No, I'm, uhh, absolutely of the opinion that you can only trust artificial intelligences about as far as you can throw them.

MINKOWSKI
I didn't know that.

EIFFEL
You didn't?

MINKOWSKI
No, I didn't.

HERA
(over intercom)
Neither did I.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... Hera?

HERA
Hi, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I... haha... didn't realize you were... "with us" as it were.

HERA
I noticed.

MINKOWSKI
Go away, Hera, this is a private conversation.

HERA
No. If I'm going to be the subject of this little têté-á-têté, I'd like to have my têté in the mix.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
I want to hear what else Officer Eiffel has to say about me.

EIFFEL
Now, Hera, to be fair, you know how critical I am of Commander Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
You are?

EIFFEL
No, of course not, I only think the highest of you.

HERA
So then you agree with her that I'm incompetent, is that it?

EIFFEL
No, I think you do a great job.

MINKOWSKI
You do?

EIFFEL
Well, most of the time.

HERA
Most of the time?

EIFFEL
Almost all of the time.

MINKOWSKI
What does that even mean?

HERA
What does that even mean?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I... I... I think that Hera is an absolutely professional operating system, and she does a great job and should... be trusted with our lives except for a few times when... Commander Minkowski could maybe... help by...
(fuck it)
For God's sake, I can't be honest with both of you here. Could one of you please step out of the room so I can say what I really think?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, get out.

HERA
Make me.

MINKOWSKI
Why you cheeky little -

EIFFEL
C'mon, Commander, you can't really hold that against her. It's just her programming!

HERA
Oh, stop. Do you have any idea how condescending that is? Just chalking everything I do to my programming? What if I just went around blaming every stupid decision <u>you</u> made on... "biology"?

EIFFEL
Hera...

HERA
"Why are they doing that, isn't that a bit dangerous?" Oh never mind, that's just their biology. "That's a terrible idea, don't they know any better?" Just that pesky ol' biology, we really should've sprang for the more expensive model.

EIFFEL
Hera...

HERA
"Good God, why are they playing with that? They're gonna get us all blown up!" Oh, it's just their biology, we'll just have God take a look under the hood the next time he comes by.

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, I'm sorry. You know I didn't mean it like that.

HERA
Do I? Apparently you don't trust Artificial Intelligences now.

EIFFEL
Hey, you can't hold that against me, you were practically wire tapping.

HERA
So what?

EIFFEL
So you... can't go off on that! I was just lying to get Commander Minkowski off my back.

MINKOWSKI
Still here, actually.

EIFFEL
Oh Goddammit. Look, I just meant that -

HERA
Of course you'd try to intimidate Eiffel into siding with you. Why am I not surprised?

MINKOWSKI
Please, like you wouldn't have done the same? You're just annoyed that I beat you to the punch.

SECTION 5

Eiffel SIGHS wearily. BUZZER.

HERA
Oh right, like I actually care enough about what you do to -

And so on. We hear the continuing argument in the background over the following:

Eiffel HITS a BUTTON.

EIFFEL
Hey Doctor Hilbert? Have you found any of those marbles yet?

HILBERT
I know what you tried to do. You tried to stop the Blessed Eternal's growth. You tried to hide the Seed of Life.

EIFFEL
See, that's exactly what I was afraid you were going to say.

HILBERT
You are no better than the oppressor. Your death shall be no quicker, no less painful, no less humiliating. Your scream shall echo through -

EIFFEL
Yep. Death, Plant Monster, Fertilizer. Got it. Talk to you later.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey guys.

The argument continues.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Guys!

The argument continues.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
OY!

MINKOWSKI
WHAT?

HERA
WHAT?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Look, our rating on the peril-o-meter just went from "Spidey-Sense is tingling" to "Bat Signal in the Sky", so this argument is **over**, okay? It's a stupid fight to begin with and your referee is throwing in the towel, so let's all just <u>stop</u>, okay?

I think you're both great! I think you both do your jobs really, really, **really** well. I think that you're both intelligent, and have good judgments, and you can definitely find a way to compromise and work together. And, just in case it wasn't already obvious, I am absolutely terrified of both of you.

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
But making me choose a side between the woman who has the military authority to **shoot** me and the woman who makes my **oxygen** is only going to end in tears!

Now. Something is seriously up with Doctor Hilbert. I don't know if he's under some kind of hypnosis or mind control or if he's just gone even madder than he normally is, but he's defecting to Team Mutant Plant Monster. Right now he's feeding his new boss all the fertilizer we have left in the supply shed, and the last thing we need is our deadly stowaway growing <u>more</u> teeth.

The fact that **I'm** trying to get the two of **you** to do the responsible thing is scary enough, but I really would like to take care of this situation before we reach Audrey II territory. So what if I said that I don't trust Hera? So what if I called Minkowski obstinate? Who the hell cares? Can we go deal with the <u>emergency</u>?

MINKOWSKI
Wait. You never called me obstinate.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Did I say obstinate? I meant... umm...

MINKOWSKI
Have you been talking about me behind my back?

EIFFEL
I-I-I-I would never!

HERA
Yeah, you would.

EIFFEL
Hera-

HERA
You were doing it just earlier when-

EIFFEL
No don't!

HERA
- you were talking to Doctor Hilbert.

MINKOWSKI
To Doctor Hilbert? You conniving little snake. What were you saying behind my back?

EIFFEL
You know, haha, I... don't think I really remember now.

HERA
One moment...

A burst of STATIC over the loudspeakers. Then:

EIFFEL
(recorded voice)
...Minkowski does pigheaded obstinacy like it's an Olympic sport...

Another burst of STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
An Olympic Sport?!

EIFFEL
Gee thanks a lot, Hera. Yeah, an Olympic... so... in a... certain way, I was... complimenting you?

MINKOWSKI
Mm-hmm, nice try.

EIFFEL
And wait a minute! That wasn't all I said! Hera, play her the rest of that tape.

HERA
I'm... having difficulty finding the rest of that recording, Officer Eiffel. I may have accidentally deleted it.

EIFFEL
(through gritted teeth)
Oh, you don't say. Well isn't that grand?

HERA
Don't let Commander Minkowski get to you. She's just afraid that the advent of artificial, highly efficient administrative intelligences are rendering middle managers and petty officers like herself obsolete. She's just taking out her insecurities on you.

MINKOWSKI
And, again, I'm **still** here.

HERA
And she's just trying to micromanage me because she's feeling threatened.

MINKOWSKI
Threatened? By you? Hah! All right, I would... maybe feel a tiny twinge of threat from your "highly efficient intelligence" if, say, everything on this station wasn't breaking all the time! Or if we could go a full week without any weird mechanical problems! Or, oh, oh, here's a good one: if your voice box didn't glitch every **ten** words!

HERA
Careful, Commander, your biology is showing.

EIFFEL
Can we... **please...** go deal with the crazy plant worshipper?

MINKOWSKI
No, we're going to have this out right now. Do you really think I'm obstinate?

HERA
And do you really think I'm not trustworthy?

EIFFEL
What the hell do you want me to say?

MINKOWSKI
Just say what you really think!

EIFFEL
What I really think? Okay, fine: I think you're both crazy. I think that you are both one hundred percent cuckoo bananas right now. You have spent the last two hours shouting at each other literally over nothing, and not even the prospect of losing the entire station to a crazy horticulture experiment has been able to get you to snap out of it! You've been yelling at each other for the past five minutes over what? Me lying to you? Me saying something awful? Like any of that's any kind of news! Why do you even care what I think? I'm so far beneath both of you that I shouldn't even register on your radars! So **no**, I don't really think that you're obstinate, and **no**, I don't think that you're not trustworthy. I think what's really the problem here is that you're both so childish and so petty that you're literally putting our lives in danger just so you can win a stupid argument!

SECTION 6

That shuts them up. After a moment we hear the PA CHIME.

HILBERT
(PA announcement)
Crew of the Hephaestus. I am here to inform you that your spaceship is now the property of the Blessed Eternal. It is fruitful and plentiful. It is a light in the cold and the dark and the ash. Its divine tendrils are even now burrowing into the heart of the ship. Surrender your flesh, and feed your new master.

This continues in the background. Minkowski SIGHS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, let’s go deal with this. Hera, do we still have those cannisters of halothane knockout gas hooked up to the ventilation system?

HERA
Yep, they’re still armed.

MINKOWSKI
All right, let’s start pumping those into the greenhouse, the bridge, and the engineering section, and go from there. Let’s knock him out before he does any more damage, and then we’ll see about stopping whatever that thing is doing to control him.

EIFFEL
Yeah, that sounds great. Let’s -

MINKOWSKI
Not. You.

EIFFEL
What?

MINKOWSKI
You stay here. I’ll deal with you later.

The door to the Comms Room SLAMS SHUT.

EIFFEL
Ugh. Awesome. Well, I guess I really screwed the pooch on this one, huh Hera?
(no answer)
Oh great.
(louder)
Real mature, both of you!

HILBERT
(still going)
... the glory of the moss. Let the stems take root in your mind, and dig out the pollen of salvation. Free yourself from -

EIFFEL
Shut up, Plant-Hilbert.

He PRESSES a BUTTON and the TRANSMISSION CUTS OFF.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
From the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station, this is Officer Doug Eiffel. Let's see if anyone ever talks to me again after this.

Good night.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"BOX 953"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - STOREROOM - 1600 HOURS

BEGIN RECORDING:

EIFFEL
Hey everyone. This is the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel. It's day 525 of the Hephaestus Mission.

If this recording sounds slightly... different from my usual logs, it's because today I'm not broadcasting from the Comms Room. I've relocated to the station's storeroom for today's session. Just, you know, it's always good to get a change of scenery, and if you get to avoid Commander Minkowski and her undying self-righteous fury, all the better!

We're having another one of *those* days at the station, dear listeners. A *bad* day. And I mean, you know me, I'm the very picture of courage in the face of danger, and all that, but trust me - in this case, discretion is the better part of valor.

We hear the overhead PA CHIMES we heard in Episode Three. It's a station-wide announcement:

MINKOWSKI
(through PA system)
Crew of the Hephaestus, this is Commander Minkowski. As I know that you are all *keenly* aware, it is time for our quarterly talent show. I know that you're aware of this because it has been clearly marked *as compulsory* in the station calendar for the past two weeks, and because I have been posting regular reminders throughout the station. And because I told both of you today at breakfast. And at lunch.

So imagine my surprise when I got down to the cargo bay and *neither* one of you were there.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I can only assume that it's because you are putting the finishing touches on your acts for today, which is nothing if not commendable... but don't push it.

I'm making this announcement from the Comms Room, where I can't help but notice you're *not*, Eiffel. I'm just going to assume that it's because we narrowly missed each other when I was coming up here and you were going down. And by the time I make it back to the cargo bay, you'll be there, ready to *enthusiastically* dazzle us with some talent. One that does *not* involve smoke rings.

EIFFEL
(sotto)
Fascist.

MINKOWSKI
(still through PA)
Same goes to you, Doctor Hilbert. This is a mandatory event, so don't make me come and get you. We're going to boost morale, we're going to bond as a crew, and we're going to have a great time doing it, even if I have to drag both of you kicking and screaming into it.

Minkowski out.

PA CHIMES.

EIFFEL
Drop the mic, Commander, why don't you? You know, it's bad enough when she makes us do something just because it's military protocol, but I think that she actually really cares about these talent shows. But friends, they're a few dramatic poetry readings beyond my breaking point. I can deal with the bad food, low shower pressure, and lack of Simpsons reruns around here, but I have my limits. It's either not smoking OR Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus," not both of them together.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

So until this whole thing blows over, I'm gonna be luxuriating in the remotest, darkest, hiding-spot-iest corner I could find on the entire station.

You know what's the scariest part of all this, though? For once, Hilbert and I actually agree on something. If anything, I think he might hate Minkowski's little talent shows even more than I do. In fact, let's see how the enemy of my enemy is doing...

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey Doctor Hilbert, how are you doing? Looks like the witching time of night is upon us.

HILBERT
(through intercom)
One moment Eiffel. Delicate process, time is of the essence.

We hear Hilbert tinkering with VARIOUS GLASS CONTAINERS and FLUIDS. He's clearly preparing some kind of substance.

EIFFEL
Yeah, no kidding, sounds like Hurricane Minkowski's on the move. You holed up somewhere yet?

HILBERT
Nyet, I have reconsidered that strategy since our conference this afternoon. Have decided to tackle problem more directly.

EIFFEL
Oh?

HILBERT
Upon further reflection, I remembered that I do, in fact, possess many talents, among them biochemistry.

EIFFEL
Already I don't like where this going.

HILBERT
Well, I am now putting the finishing touches on a rather powerful concoction. I will submit this to Commander Minkowski as my entry for the talent show, claiming that it is a combination nerve tonic, energy drink, and breath freshener. That, however, will be a clever lie.

EIFFEL
What's it actually do? Turn her into a frog?

HILBERT
Nothing so elaborate, just powerful sedative and narcotic. It will knock her out for the next twelve hours, plenty of time for the talent show window to elapse and allow us to focus on our *real* work.

EIFFEL
You know, Doctor, you can't solve all your problems by knocking someone out.

HILBERT
People keep saying that, and yet my problems keep going away.

Whatever Hilbert is working on suddenly FIZZES and POPS.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
There, completed. Stand by Eiffel, I will report once situation has been neutralized.

EIFFEL
Godspeed, Doc.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, until we get a confirmation that the coast is clear, let's just lay low, shall we?

You know, I'd never really paid attention to this storeroom before. It's always just kind of been... here. We've never really needed anything from here and...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
yeah, I don't even know if I've been in this room before.

There must be hundreds of crates in here. They've all got a number printed on the side, and the Goddard Futuristics logo. They're the corporate sponsor for this mission, so I guess maybe they're using us as free storage space? What the hell are they even keeping up here?

We hear him PRYING OPEN A BOX.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the... looks like this entire box is just full of dolls. Like those... weird Russian dolls that you can open and there's like a bunch of smaller dolls inside them. Only, umm... none of them have eyes. It's just... a bunch of weird, eye-less Russian dolls.

I'm just gonna leave this alone.

He SLOWLY CLOSES the BOX.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, that was really weird. Let's see... how about... Box 239...

He OPENS A BOX. We hear RUMMAGING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... Well, this one is just full of pieces of paper. Just a big pile of... what? "Dear Santa, For Christmas this year I want a Harley Davidson remote control -" Holy crap, *this* is where these letters end up? Conspiracy revealed!

He SHUTS the BOX.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Now I think I kinda need to see if this huge one has Santa in it or something. Box 56, let's see...

We hear him STRUGGLING with the COVER of a HUGE CRATE. Once it finally comes off:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Holy crap. You guys. There's a cannon in here! Why is there a cannon in here? What practical purpose could a cannon possibly serve in outer space! I don't...I...

He SNAPS his fingers.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, wait a minute! I think I saw... yeah, yeah!

We hear some PAPER RUSTLING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
There's a manifest by the door that says what's in each of these crates. Jeez, how long is this thing...?

We hear him SHUFFLING through PAGES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Let's see... Box 217 has one thousand, three hundred and forty six red L-shaped lego blocks. Which, first of all, why would anyone want that many L-blocks? L-blocks are useless.

He FLIPS the PAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Box 300 has the individual pieces for three full suits of armor, near-mint conditions. Never know when you might need one of those...

FLIPS THE PAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Box 552 apparently has the "Partial skull of unnamed megafauna specimen 58," whatever that is. Oh, and there's a note: "Please handle with care and with a... vague feeling of existential dread." Well, at least they're specific...

FLIPS PAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
This is some Raiders of the Lost Ark level stuff here.

FLIPS PAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I mean, I wonder if the Ark of the Covenant is tucked up under a Yeti skull or a scale model of Atlantis or something.

FLIPS PAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... What?

Something clearly changed on that last flip. Eiffel is silent for a BEAT. Then he CLEARS his throat.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, listeners I just... there's a box that's... well it says here that Box 953 is... "Reserved for Douglas Eiffel. Do not open under any circumstances." Umm... what?

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(urgent, through intercom)
Eiffel.

There's another sound coming through the intercom, indeterminate and in the background for the moment.

EIFFEL
Can you hang on for a moment, Doc?

HILBERT
No, I cannot! Eiffel, situational norms here are catastrophically far from the stability of hanging!

EIFFEL
Really? That's nice.

It's rapidly becoming obvious that Eiffel isn't listening to a single word that Hilbert is saying.

HILBERT
No, it's not! I - I'm not sure what went wrong, but my compound did not render the Commander unconscious. Instead it has triggered some sort of... impaired euphoric effect on the subject.

EIFFEL
Oh. Cool.

HILBERT
No it is not cool! It is diametrically opposed to cool! Eiffel, you don't understand, there is <u>singing</u>!

And yeah, that's what that background sound is: Minkowski doing a horrible, off-key, slurred, and quite drunken rendition of the Major-General song from *Pirates of Penzance*.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
This is an <u>emergency</u>. I require immediate assistance.

EIFFEL
Sure, sure, whatever you say.

HILBERT
Eiffel!

MINKOWSKI
(through intercom)
Hilbert! Who you talking to?

HILBERT
Oh, umm...

MINKOWSKI
You should - no talking! You should be focusing on making pirate costumes for the show -

We hear the sound of a GUN COCKING.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
- shouldn't you.

HILBERT
Yes, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Swashes and buckles, Hilbert. Swashes. And. Buckles.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(hiccups)
All right, one more time from the top, Hera!

HILBERT
Eiffel, please hurry.

BUZZER. A long silent BEAT. Then –

EIFFEL
Why is there a box that says "Reserved for Douglas Eiffel" up here? Like... does that mean that whatever is in the box is stuff for me? Or is it that... I'm the one that... Where the hell is this box anyway?

All right, one second, dear listeners, let me see if I can find this thing. I'll be right back.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING.

Section 4

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey again. So I've spent the past two hours tearing this place apart, but I still haven't been able to find Box 953. I've found all sorts of other weird crap up here, including the shrunken heads of Paul Harding, MD, and Associates. So, you know, ew.

He SHUDDERS at the memory.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm still not sure where... Hang on, I think might see it, that's definitely a nine and a five in that big box by the back. One moment, let me check that out.

We hear him moving away from the recorder. After a moment, we hear a BUZZER.

HILBERT
Eiffel! Whatever action you are taking to save me, you <u>must</u> hurry. Things have taken a turn for the worst.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Commander Minkowski has demanded that I make her ice cream for the conclusion of the talent show. I tried to explain that I don't have the necessary ingredients, but she just fired a shot past my head. Honestly, I'm not sure if it was a warning shot or if she just missed.

I am doing my best to create an approximation of ice cream, but I fear what will happen when it fails the taste test. You need to do something, before it's - ahhh, Commander, I did not see you there!

MINKOWSKI
Did I - I didn't tell you talk to anyone, Doctor? I thought I told you to make ice cream.

HILBERT
Yes, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Good, good, ice cream is good. You know why, Hilbert?

HILBERT
Wh-why is that, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Because... I scream for ice cream. I *scream* for ice cream. You scream for ice cream, right, Doctor?

HILBERT
Of course. Of course I do!

MINKOWSKI
Of course you do. I scream, you scream, I scream, you scream, we... **all** scream, for ice cream.

We don't exactly catch what she does, but her sentence is punctuated by a HORRIFIED SCREAM FROM HILBERT.

BUZZER.

After a moment -

EIFFEL
Mmm, no, turns out that was Box 957.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Nothing in there except for some old farmer's almanacs, and some diaries belonging to someone called Victoire Fourier. I think it's time to call in the cavalry. Hey, Hera, can you hear me?

HERA
Yes, I can, Officer Eiffel. Can this wait for a moment? I'm trying to learn my lines.

EIFFEL
Lines? Oh God, tell me you're not getting sucked into Minkowski's crazy talent show thing, are you?

HERA
Pirates of Penzance is a classic of 19th century comic opera. And sure, Isabel isn't the biggest role in the play, but it's a start.

EIFFEL
There's many things going wrong with what you just said but I so don't have time right now. Listen, multi-task for a moment -

HERA
Eiffel, I'm *always* multitasking.

EIFFEL
- and help me out here. Do you have the storeroom manifest knocking around your head somewhere?

HERA
Of course, basic item description and organizational imprint for all... one thousand and thirty-seven crates.

EIFFEL
Okay, what can you tell me about Number 953?

HERA
One second.
(beat)
Umm, not much. It says it's reserved for you, but beyond that the records are blank.

EIFFEL
Nothing else?

HERA
Not in my internal banks. Let me access the central memory banks on the Hephaestus's Compu - ERROR. INAPPROPRIATE SECURITY CLEARANCE. FILE ACCESS DENIED. FILE ACCESS DENIED. Ahh, goddammit.

EIFFEL
Are you okay?

HERA
Yes. No. I hate when that happens. Do you have any idea how annoying it is to get kicked off a thought when you're halfway through having it? Now I'm gonna have a headache for the rest of the night.

EIFFEL
So you can't tell me anything else?

HERA
No. There's information in the system, but I don't have the - ERROR. INAPPROPRIATE SECURITY CLEARANCE. FILE ACCESS DENIED. FILE ACCESS DENIED. Ahhhhhhh.

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, don't make yourself short circuit. Stop trying to access that file.

HERA
Easy for you to say! You try *not* thinking about something sometime, see how easy it is. I think I would need Commander Minkowski's security codes to get that information

EIFFEL
Yeah, well, that's not happening anytime in the near future. Could you at least tell me where this Box is?

HERA
Oh, that I *can* do, I just can't access the information about what's inside it.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
It's on the far side of the storeroom, right behind Box 102.

EIFFEL
Hera, what are you talking about? There's nothing there just holy crap, *that's* Box 953? I thought that was part of the wall!

HERA
Nope, that's the one you're looking for. Listen, Eiffel, I'm gonna go. Commander Minkowksi is running me through the cues of the Act One Finale, and I should really give her my full attention. Well, full-ish attention.

Eiffel is silent for a BEAT.

EIFFEL
So that's Box 953. Umm, it's different from the other boxes. First of all, it's... it's large. I believe the technical, military term is GINORMOUS. You could probably fit an elephant in there. And it's made out of some kind of black metal. All of the other boxes are restrained, but this one looks like it's been bolted in place.

How the hell do you even open this thing? Oh, I see. There's a groove right there, and a hinge next to... this label that says, "KEEP CLOSED AT ALL TIMES." So... I guess this section just... swings outwards.

Ahhh! And it's *cold*. Box 953 is really, really cold, dear listeners.

Umm, and there's a sound coming from inside the box. It's like this humming that kind of comes and goes. It kinda sounds like...

He stops. LAUGHS NERVOUSLY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hehe, I *almost* said that it sounded like a heartbeat, but, well, that would *crazy*.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That would be completely impossible and insane, right, dear listeners?

Right?

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I guess I could just go. You know, leave this alone. Walk away, get some coffee, maybe see if I can get a choir part in Minkowski's musical extravaganza without getting shot in the face.

Ahhh, who am I kidding? I'm going to go now, dear listeners. I'm going to go... into Box 953. I'm not sure what's going to happen when I do. I don't know what exactly is... *reserved* for me in there, but it seems like something I should know.

I need to know.

Okay. I'm leaving now, dear listeners. I will see you on the other side.

We hear him MOVING AWAY from the recorder. For a moment things are SILENT.

Then, we begin to hear ODD NOISES in the background. A DOOR OPENS, a METAL SOMETHING HITS ANOTHER METAL SOMETHING, some WOOD BREAKS, SOMETHING CRACKS. It's all jumbled together, and difficult to make out.

The concluding sound, however, is not. It is very clearly a LOUD BLAST.

The rest is STATIC.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2100 HOURS

EIFFEL
Listeners, I am back. I am back not from the inside of Box 953, as I had hoped, but rather from an long series of complications. It's been a... long, painful, frankly annoying three hours since I last talked to you, and a lot has happened.

I *tried* to open Box 953, but I found that the lid had not only been set in place, but actually bolted and riveted to the box. In lieu of superhuman strength, I decided to go get a crowbar from engineering.

I'm guessing I must have only been out of the room for a minute or so before Commander Minkowski came in. Apparently, she was looking for me because she needed a second pair of eyes to tell her if the prop sabre for her Major-General costume was a bit much.

I, uh, may have... forgotten to put the lid back on Box 56. That would be the one with the, uh, cannon. Well, in her... let's call it excited state, Commander Minkowski decided that a cannon would be just the thing to liven up the end of the second act of the play. So she decided to test it by drunkenly lighting the fuse and blowing a hole in the station's hull. Like you do.

Between the air catching fire and the depressurization of the storeroom and... you know what, let's just say that by the time that we got her back into the main structure and sealed off the room, practically all of the crates had left the building. And a few minutes later they had fallen into a decaying orbit around the star.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And a few minutes after that they were incinerated into a pile of ash.

Box 953 is gone, dear listeners. It’s gone, and I never found out what was inside of it. Once again, our quarterly talent shows have taken something away from me. Sometime that I can never, ever get back.

I guess I should be... grateful. Commander Minkowski only suffered minimal burn and frostbite injuries, and, once whatever crap Hilbert gave her wears off, should make a full recovery. I guess I even have new stuff to tease her with, now that she’s unleashed her inner Bob Fosse. And I suppose there’s something to be said about the fact that we didn’t lose the entire station from that hull breach. That we didn’t all die in a blazing inferno or suffocating in the blackness of the void or freezing to death.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
But I **really** wanted to know what was inside Box 953, dear listeners. I **really** wanted to know.

Ugh, thank God this day is over...

From the Communications Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus, this Doug Eiffel, signing off. Good night.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"THE EMPTY MAN COMETH"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1400 HOURS

EIFFEL
This is the log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Welcome to Day 530 of our little camping trip to the Leo Constellation.

We hear the PA CHIME overhead.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And you're just in time for today's weather.

HERA
(PA announcement)
Attention crewmembers. It seems that the ion wind cluster that I've been monitoring for the past twelve hours is veering towards us after all.

We hear Eiffel GROAN.

EIFFEL
Balls.

HERA
I'd hoped to avoid any direct contact with the anomaly, but its path is shifting faster than I can adjust our trajectory, and it's now in a direct intercept vector. Please take a moment to ensure that all of the cautionary measures we discussed earlier have been properly implemented. The interior environment of the Hephaestus should remain largely undisturbed, but brace yourselves for light turbulence and impaired functionality in some of our electrical systems for the next three and a half hours. Thank you.

The PA CHIMES again.

EIFFEL
I swear to God... if it’s not a passing comet, it’s a solar flare. If it’s not a flare, it’s a geomagnetic storm. Now it’s ion wind! Who knew there could be so much freaking weather without an atmosphere...?

We hear the DOOR to the Comms Room OPENING.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you locked down the solar panels this afternoon right? I want to make sure that we’re ready for whatever this ion wind thing can throw our way.

EIFFEL
Can we ever really be “ready” for anything, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
I just want to know if we’re safe.

EIFFEL
Define “safe.”

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, come on, it’s a simple question.

EIFFEL
Ooorrrr is it?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Are you done now?

EIFFEL
Yeah, I think that ran its course.

MINKOWSKI
Did you have fun?

EIFFEL
Ehh, not really. Low hanging fruit. But, yeah, I closed up the panels this morning, and double checked to make sure they’re set about an hour ago. Hatches are battened down.

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Good. Might just get through this without too much damage.

EIFFEL
Riders on the storm, man, riders on the storm.

A SOUND kicks up. It's a new sound, one we haven't heard before. Definitely coming from a machine, it kind of sounds like an old-school stock ticker.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, haven't heard that one in a while.

MINKOWSKI
What is that?

We hear Eiffel starting to TINKER with machinery.

EIFFEL
Pulse beacon relay receptor. Basically, one-way space fax. Looks like something's coming down the pipeline from our friends over at Canaveral.

MINKOWSKI
We're getting a message from Command?

EIFFEL
It's been a while, hasn't it? Whatever happened to those weekly calls from Mom and Dad?

MINKOWSKI
What's it say?

EIFFEL
Decoding transgalactic transmissions ain't like dusting crops, farmgirl. Gimme a moment.

He tinkers for a moment, then the sound CHANGES into the much more recognizable sound of PRINTING. After a moment it stops.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Here we go, let's see.
(clears throat)
"The golden rose is ready for melting.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Proceed with designation Alpha. Beware. Five. The Empty Man has awoken."

His tone goes from chipper to very confused over the course of reading that message.

MINKOWSKI
What? Give me that.
(beat)
Well, that makes no sense. You must have transcoded it wrong.

EIFFEL
Uh-uh. While I won't deny that is totally something that could theoretically happen, if there'd been a transcription error we wouldn't be looking at words. We'd have like, I don't know, random strings of ampersands and sevens. I don't know what they're playing at, but this is the message Command wanted us to have.

MINKOWSKI
But it makes no sense.

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah, I'm kind of relieved we agree about that.

MINKOWSKI
Well can we radio them and ask for a clarification?

EIFFEL
Unfortunately the good folks at Goddard Futuristics spared every expense when they put together this boat. We only get high speed cablevision for the incoming - we're still on dial-up for the outgoing. We can send something, but it'll take about two weeks to get a message back to Earth... and that's *if* this ion thing doesn't slow it down.

MINKOWSKI
So then what the hell are we supposed to do with this?

EIFFEL
Hang on, I've got an idea.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Doctor Hilbert, you copy?

HILBERT
(over intercom)
Loud and clear, Eiffel. What is it?

EIFFEL
The words "golden rose" or "designation Alpha" mean anything to you?

HILBERT
What? Why?

EIFFEL
We just got a weird ass telex from Command, we're trying to make heads or tails of it.

MINKOWSKI
Read him the other thing, the thing about the man.

EIFFEL
Oh, yeah. Uh... "The Empty Man has awoken." Ring any gongs?

HILBERT
Afraid not, Eiffel. Not entirely sure what that could be a reference to.

EIFFEL
(to Minkowski)
Hmm. Well, worth a shot.

The COMMS MACHINE SPRINGS TO LIFE AGAIN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh. Uhhh, un momento, por favor, Doctor Hilberto. Looks like we're getting another wire.

THE MESSAGE GETS PRINTED.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, let's see... "The Andromedas are broken.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
The northern light should be reversed. Alert. Four. The Empty Man approaches."
(beat)
Have, like, a whole bunch of drugs been made legal while we've been up here? Am I missing out on that?

MINKOWSKI
All right, hang on, let's look at this rationally. So the first two sentences of both of those messages make completely no sense, right?

HILBERT
Right.

EIFFEL
Right.

MINKOWSKI
Right. But then the back halves followed a pattern. It's a warning, then something about this Empty Man, whatever that is.

EIFFEL
Yeah, and there's those numbers. Five on the first one, then four on the second one.

HILBERT
A countdown, maybe?

EIFFEL
What happens when we run out of numbers? The Empty Man commeth?

A silent beat. No one has a good answer to that question. The SHIP CREAKS. Finally:

MINKOWSKI
All right, look. For the time being, we have no idea what these messages mean, so let's not get worked up about them. If Command is trying to... warn us about something, there's not much we can do about it just from these messages. So let's focus on what we *do* know is real, like this ion cloud we're about to go through. All right?

EIFFEL
Yeah.

HILBERT
Indeed.

EIFFEL
Good plan.

The COMMS MACHINE WINDS UP. It PRINTS out a new message.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(clears throat)
"The frozen pages are blank. Decide what to do with the time that is given to you. Emergency. Three. The Empty Man hungers."

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
On second thought, I'm gonna inspect the armory to make sure that all of our stores are in good working order.

HILBERT
And I'm going to run a few security checks on our airlock perimeter.

EIFFEL
Right, yeah, good plans.

BUZZER. A DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm just gonna... hold down the fort here. I guess.

Umm, one second, dear listeners.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hi again, folks.

It's been about three hours since I turned off the recorder. And things have been pretty quiet. Minkowski and Hilbert have been checking the station's systems, making sure that nothing is too far out of the norm.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
They've locked up all of the airlocks and access points, so we should be... pretty safe. Based on our... limited perception of safety. Oh boy.

Hey, speaking of...

The DOOR OPENS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, just finished our third sweep through the station, and everything is locked up tight.

HILBERT
The sensory alarm system is calibrated to its most sensitive setting. If anything other than ourselves moves through the station, we should know about it.

MINKOWSKI
And I've retrieved two of the handguns from the armory, so if and when this Empty Man thing shows up, we should be ready for it.

EIFFEL
Only two guns? There's three of us.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert's not a trained marksman, and I'm not putting a gun in the hand of a civilian just yet. It's you and me, Doug.

EIFFEL
Oh great. The full hoo-ah.

The SHIP shakes as a TREMOR runs through it.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

MINKOWSKI
Easy, Eiffel. We're hitting the worst of the ion winds, that's our scheduled turbulence. How are you doing Hera?

HERA
Acceptable, Commander, although certain systems are beginning to show signs of strain.

MINKOWSKI
Do you best to keep things under control. Let us know if anything goes seriously wrong.

EIFFEL
Hey, on the plus side at least we haven't had any other messages from Command, so maybe this whole thing has just blown -

The COMMS MACHINE starts to WHIR. PRINTS a message.

BEAT.

HILBERT
You had to say something. You had to open your mouth.

Eiffel SIGHS, then slowly grabs the new message.

EIFFEL
"The broken flower is in the vase. Don't listen to your eyes. Danger. Two. The Empty Man sees you."

Okay, officially now, what the hell? What's coming towards us? What is this apparently indescribable thing?

MINKOWSKI
Don't freak. I don't like this any more than you do, but we're still on a space station, eight light years away from Earth. Things can't just *show up* on our doorstep.

EIFFEL
You know Commander, that would be a pretty good argument - if we didn't have a crazy plant monster living in our air vents! Or if we didn't get those weird whispers when we lost power. Honestly, there's a lot of stuff that goes down around here that really shouldn't be possible, but here we are.

HILBERT
Hera, are there any objects or crafts on an approach vector towards the Hephaestus?

HERA
N-no, Doctor Hilbert, not... at the moment.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? You don't sound very confident.

HERA
Well, the ion winds are interfering with my sensory instruments, and my visibility of the airspace around the Hephaestus is down to 81%. Nothing is showing up on my sensory input, but I'm working with blind spots. However, the possibility of an object being nearby is mathematically unlikely.

EIFFEL
"Mathematically unlikely"? That's the best that we can do right now?

HERA
I'm sorry! I'm dealing with a rather extreme weather condition here, and a boarding party wasn't exactly something I prepped for this morning. Visibility down to 56%.

EIFFEL
Oh this just gets better and better.

The COMMS MACHINE comes to life again. PRINTS A MESSAGE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... "There's no way out. There's no way out. But there is a way in. Danger. One. The Empty Man shall knock."

BEAT. Then, as one:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera?

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
Still at zero sensory contact. Visibility down to 37%.

EIFFEL
Is there anything we can do to get out of here? Can we... put the station in reverse and back out of this cloud or something?

MINKOWSKI
Hera's already using all of our engine power to compensate for the ion winds, if she tried to change course now, we might end up -

HILBERT
Shhh. Quiet.
(beat)
Don't you hear that?

Now they do. There's a soft METAL CREAKING coming from outside the station. After a moment:

EIFFEL
What's that?

HILBERT
Could just be side effect of the ion winds. We're going through the worst of it now, it might be exerting enough energy on the ship to cause a temperature fluctuation. It could just be metal in the ship's hull expanding a bit.

EIFFEL
There are a lot of "could"s in that explanation, Doctor.

MINKOWSKI
Hera. Is anything going on with our hull?

HERA
Not... as far as I can tell, Commander, but visibility is down to 9%. I'm basically flying blind for the next few minutes.

A few other noises creep in. Some air hissing, some other metal groans, perhaps something resembling a THUNK.

HILBERT
Just the Hephaestus compensating for the weather conditions. Atmospheric regulators, barometric stabilizers, all just doing their job. It's all regular noises in the process of keeping the interior of the Hephaestus a warm and stable environment.

MINKOWSKI
Are... you sure about that, Doctor?

HILBERT
No, but I like the sound of my voice a lot better than the sounds of what's going on out there.

THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. It's a sharp, metallic knocking sound. A LONG BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert? Thoughts?

HILBERT
Well, that sounded like one of two things. Option one is simply the hull cooling after coming into contact with a... unusually warm pocket of gas that's been swept up in the wake of the ion winds.

EIFFEL
What are the odds of that being the case?

HILBERT
Within the realm of the possible. Barely.

MINKOWSKI
What's the other option?

THUNK. THUNK. THUNK.

HILBERT
Something's walking on the outside of the Hephaestus.

EIFFEL
Oh, it's him. It's definitely him.

MINKOWSKI
Shh. Stop that. We don't know that, Eiffel. Listen to Doctor Hilbert. It could just be the station reacting to the ion cloud. There's a perfectly reasonable explanation here.

EIFFEL
C'mon, Commander! After all the crazy wamajama that we've seen up here? And with Command braking radio silence for the first time in months to warn us? Yes, there's perfectly reasonable explanation, and it's that the empty, hungry thing is out there right now, about to go Big Bad Wolf on our straw house!

MINKOWSKI
Hera, there's nothing moving inside the station aside from the three of us, right?

HERA
That's correct, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
And all of the entrances to the station are still closed, right?

HERA
Rig- err, yes. Sure. Probably.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Probably?

HERA
I... I'm having some trouble connecting to Aft Deck Airlock number 3. I'm getting some low-level electromagnetic interference. Climate and pressure controls register as normal, but I cannot confirm that the airlock has not been opened.

The COMMS MACHINE PRINTS out another message.

EIFFEL
"Zero. The Empty Man is with you. Extreme danger. Zero. The Empty Man is with you. Extreme danger."

That's all it says.

For a LONG BEAT, things are silent. The ship creaks lightly, and various ambient noises go back and forth as the seconds tick by. Is there something else up there with them?

HERA
Not to alarm you all, but my systems indicate a power fluctuation is immane -

The lights FLICK OFF just as there's a loud KNOCK against the hull. And just like that, everyone snaps.

MINKOWSKI
RIGHT. EIFFEL. AIRLOCK 3. FLASHLIGHT ON AND DON'T GO WEAPONS FREE UNTIL I FREAKING TELL YOU.

HILBERT
Commander, I must insist we secure my samples and also there are aggressive anti-carbon emulsifiers which we could -

EIFFEL
OH GOD OH GOD WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? THIS IS IT, WE'RE GOING TO DIE, RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

HERA
Hold on! Hold ON! Lights back to nominal in exactly one second.

Everyone freezes for a second BEAT. The lights FLICK BACK ON and the COMMS MACHINE SPRINGS TO LIFE AGAIN. It PRINTS OUT A NEW MESSAGE.

EIFFEL
Oh Goddamit.

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
You have got to be kidding me.

HILBERT
What?

EIFFEL
Those sons of bitches!

MINKOWSKI
What?!

HILBERT
What?!

Eiffel lets out a SIGH. Then:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
"The preceding six pulse beacon relays that you have received, have been part of a psychological experiment. Please disregard the content of these messages, and return to regular operational activities as soon as possible. Please record, and clearly label, any unusual crew behavior, deviation from protocol, or undue lack of decorum that resulted on account of the transmission of these messages in your daily logs. Thank you for your cooperation."

HERA
Well, following *that* this is going to seem a lot less sexy, but we're finally starting to move past the ion wind cluster. Visibility returning to normal, and systems stabilizing. I can confirm that there are no outside presences or lifeforms with any degree of nutritional insufficiency at this time.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Hera.

EIFFEL
Those bastards! How dare they-

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
- put us through something like that? It's cruel! And sick! And other adjectives! What kind of person is deranged enough to call *that* an experiment?

MINKOWSKI
Relax. We've all had enough excitement for one evening. C'mon, let's all just take a moment to cool off, gather ourselves, and... really reflect on how horrible what was just done to us was.

EIFFEL
Commander, you're not going to just leave things at that, are you?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, don't worry. I think you'll find that, what did you say it was? Two weeks? Two weeks from tomorrow the folks at Command are going to get a fantastically worded message from the three of us, telling them exactly what we thought of their little test. I just wouldn't want to spoil something like that by rushing into it. I think, gentlemen, we need a proper night's sleep to really let our anger reach it's full potential.

HILBERT
I concur wholeheartedly, commander. If you require any sentiments beyond the reach of the English language, I am happy to supply alternatives in Russian, Norwegian, German, Swedish, or Afrikaans.

EIFFEL
Hey, kids, I'll log it in all six.

MINKOWSKI
Sounds good. Good night, Eiffel. Doctor.

HILBERT
Good night all.

EIFFEL
Good night!

The Comms Room door CLOSES.

Oh, hell, speaking of logs... I guess you caught all of that, so you might be able to pick up the effect your twisted experiment had on us. Hint: IT WAS AWFUL.

Sorry if things got a bit crazy for a while there, dear listeners, but... well, you see the kind of things we have to deal with.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And I used to complain about my boss at Pizza Hut...

Anyway, from the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station, this is Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, signing off.

Good night, folks!

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"EXTREME DANGER BUG"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

EPISODE 11

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CARGO BAY - 1400 HOURS

We begin, as usual:

EIFFEL
Welcome, friends, to a very special live action episode of the log of Douglas Eiffel, Communications Officer to the stars. Today I'm gonna shake things up a little bit - be a little less NPR and a little more National Geography with some mobile reportage. Rather than just hear me droning on and on about all the terrible stuff that happens around here, let's look for some of the terrible stuff as it happens.

We hear him OPENING A DOOR and moving into a different space. After a moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, here we go! Looks like we've stumbled onto a wild Minkowksi, or as it's scientifically known, Stickus-Up-De-Assus, in its natural habitat. Let's get a closer look.

We hear him going down a flight of stairs.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel - what the hell are you doing? Get that microphone out of my face.

EIFFEL
I'm documenting life on the station for future generations.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, this is really -

EIFFEL
Shh, shh.
(clears throat)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Here we see the Minkowski in a rare moment of symbiotic cooperation with one of its neighboring species, the Creepus Maximus. Any words for posterity, Doctor Hilbert?

HILBERT
Not now, Eiffel, this is very delicate.

EIFFEL
Eloquent as always, such a lovely, delicate species.

MINKOWSKI
Would it... kill you... to stop messing around... and give us a hand?

EIFFEL
Oooof, sorry Commander, but as a documentarian I have a sacred duty to observe without perturbing the natural order of things. So, no can do.
(clicks his tongue)
But anyway, what is this thing you're both hauling? Some kind of tank?

MINKOWSKI
What - What'd you mean "What is it?" It's one of the nitrogen tanks for the station's fuel rotation.

EIFFEL
You say that like it's supposed to mean something to me.

MINKOWSKI
It should - you were supposed to depressurize this thing this morning.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Oh.

MINKOWSKI
You do remember me asking you to do that, right?

EIFFEL
... yeeeessss.

MINKOWSKI
And you did depressurize this tank, **right**?

EIFFEL
... yeeeessss.

MINKOWSKI
Is that, “Yes, I did it” or “Yes, I have no idea what you’re talking about but I don’t want to get in trouble?”

EIFFEL
... yeeeessss.

MINKOWSKI
Goddammit, Eiffel!

HILBERT
Do you have any idea how dangerous an improperly regulated nitrogen tank can be?

EIFFEL
Oh, c’mon, how bad can it be? This thing looks super solid.

We hear him gently KNOCKING on the TANK.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
See, safe as hou-

Halfway through that word, the top of the nitrogen tank FLIES OFF. The AIR SHOOTS OUT OF THE TANK in a concentrated stream, sending the tank FLYING THROUGH THE AIR.

MINKOWSKI
Get down!

Three bodies HIT THE FLOOR. The room explodes into CACOPHONY as tank flies every which way, BOUNCING OFF WALLS, KNOCKING THINGS OVER, etc. It’s LOUD. It’s FAST. It’s DANGEROUS.

Finally, the tank hits a wall and, with a sickening CRUNCH, goes STRAIGHT THROUGH IT. It finally settles on the floor, it’s contents spent.

For a beat, all we hear is DEBRIS and BITS OF HEPHAESTUS knocking around. Finally -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
All right, anybody who's not dead say, "Ow."

EIFFEL
Ow.

HILBERT
Ow.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel, one of these days I am going to **actually** kill you.

EIFFEL
Honestly, Commander, I may well beat you to that. Jesus, did that thing just go through that wall?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, tell me that tank didn't hit an electric line or something. Is anything going horribly wrong?

HERA
Umm... Hard to say, Commander. Ask again later?

MINKOWSKI
Hera. Sit rep. Now.

HERA
Uhhh, well, it seems the tank went through one of the station's exterior walls.

EIFFEL
WHAT?

HERA
But - but sensors show that the room you're in isn't losing air or pressure, soooo... umm... Yay? I'm really not sure what's happening here.

MINKOWSKI
(getting up, dusting herself off)
Hand me that flashlight.
(flashlight clicks on)
Hera, what are you talking about? This isn't an exterior wall, there's a room right here.

HERA
No, there’s not. Commander, I’m looking at the station schematics and at all my sensory inputs, there’s nothing there.

MINKOWSKI
And **I’m** looking through this hole and telling you that there’s a room here. Look, if I just step through this hole -

HERA
No, don’t!

MINKOWSKI
There, see? Where am I showing up on the station’s sensors?

HERA
(how do I say this delicately...?)
... Outer space, Commander. The station’s positioning trackers are indicating that you’re outside the station.

A beat as Eiffel, Minkowski, and Hilbert take this in.

EIFFEL
Hilbert? Any idea on how that works?

HILBERT
Well... I suppose it’s possible that Hera’s sensory input hardware was calibrated to exclude this particular section of the spaceship.

EIFFEL
Annnd why the hell would they want to do that?

MINKOWSKI
Let’s find out. Come on.

We hear the sound of TWO MORE FLASHLIGHTS CLICKING ON as Eiffel and Hilbert join Minkowski in

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

EIFFEL
Whoa, how big is this place?

MINKOWSKI
Looks like it's at least the size of the observatory, maybe a little bigger. Look, over there. That's the outline of a door frame, but it's been walled up.

EIFFEL
Anybody see a lightswitch?

HILBERT
Over here.

CLICK. No lights come on. CLICK. CLICK. Nothing.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Must have been disconnected from the power grid. Hera would have noticed if circuits were flowing to a non-existent room.

EIFFEL
Oh great.

MINKOWSKI
Doctor Hilbert, over here. Look at all these jars, and the tools in this drawer. It looks like -

HILBERT
Like a medical facility, yes, Commander. This is a laboratory.

MINKOWSKI
What's it doing in the -

EIFFEL
AHH!

Minkowski and Hilbert whirl around towards the sound of Eiffel's scream.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you all right?

EIFFEL
No! Commander, there's a dead spider in that jar. A **huge** spider!

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Is that it?

EIFFEL
Is that it? Look at this thing! Its legs are so hairy, and, Jesus, look at that stinger, it's gotta be at least as big as my thumb.
(shudders)
I hate spiders, creepy little...

HILBERT
It's not just over there, Eiffel. Look, there's more of them in those jars. Whoever owned this lab must have been running genetic experiments on arachnids.

EIFFEL
To make them **bigger**? What was the objective of that? To spice up my nightmares?

Behind Eiffel, there's some MOVEMENT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm, did anybody else hear something just now?

HILBERT
It's not unheard of to put together large space stations by amalgamating individual parts from smaller crafts. If the Hephaestus was assembled in such a way, this room could just be a vestige from an older mission.

EIFFEL
I don't know Doc, that still feels like a stretch. Why go through the trouble of walling up Charlotte's Lab instead of just clearing it out?

We hear the sound of a MACHINE BOOTING UP.

MINKOWSKI
Hey, looks like this computer terminal's still working. Must be running on emergency power. Let's see... Umm, I've got the log of one... Doctor Elias Selberg. Entry number #653. "
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Alpha Test Series has yielded mixed results. Specimen growth and development extremely promising, but extremely high levels of toxicity unintended side effect. Contact with live specimens extremely dangerous, as shown with recent exposure trial."

Again, we hear some MOVEMENT.

EIFFEL
Uhh, guys...

MINKOWSKI
"Captain Lovelace has ordered termination of all samples. Shame to lose months of work, but hazard undeniable. Will have to proceed with extreme caution if hope to-"

We hear the COMPUTER SHUTTING DOWN.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Out of juice. That's it for storytime.

EIFFEL
Okay, this place is officially giving me the creeps. Why would anyone go through the trouble of walling up this place just to keep us out?

HERA
Umm... I have an alternative theory, Officer Eiffel, but I don't think you'll like it.

EIFFEL
What?

HERA
The walling in... it might not have been a way of keeping you out. It may have been a way of keeping something **in.**

A BEAT. And then again, something SCUTTLING.

EIFFEL
Comman-

MINKOWSKI
That time I heard it, Eiffel. Everyone with me, back away from walls, tables, cabinets, anything that could be used as cover. We're going to back out of this room. Quickly, quickly.

HILBERT
Hera, can you pinpoint the location of the other creature in this room?

HERA
Doctor, I can't see anything going on in that room. I can barely even hear you right now.

EIFFEL
How is this thing even alive? We've been here for over a year and a half, how is it still alive? What has it been **eating**?

MINKOWSKI
Less questions, more getting out of - Hilbert, look out!

HILBERT
Gah!

We hear the sound of the SCUFFLE as Hilbert jumps out of the way of the SPIDER. It lets out a SHRILL CHITTERING sound.

MINKOWSKI
Doctor are you -

HILBERT
Fine, Commander, but I don't know where the spider went.

EIFFEL
Where is it? Where is it? Where is it?

A beat as they look around, flashing their lights over the various walls. We hear SCUTTLING, CHITTERING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is... is it gone?

A BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I'm... not sure. Let's just get out of this room before it comes back and - EIFFEL, YOUR SHOULDER!

EIFFEL
AHHH!

We hear EIFFEL THRASH ABOUT, KNOCKING OVER SOME JARS in a nearby table.

MINKOWSKI
Light, light, get me some light here!

Everything is STILL and quiet again. Eiffel HYPERVENTILATES SLIGHTLY.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
... Eiffel, are you okay?

EIFFEL
N-no.

MINKOWSKI
Did it sting you?

EIFFEL
No... not yet.

MINKOWSKI
Yet? What do you mean? Did you see where it went?

EIFFEL
It... It... It...

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, stay with me. Where did the spider go?

EIFFEL
It... Commander, it ran down my shirt. It's standing on my stomach. Oh God oh God what do I do?

A horrified BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Are you sure?

EIFFEL
Oh, I'm sure. I can feel it **walking** on my **skin.**
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
It's hairy *and* slimy, it's hairy *and* slimy, oh God, **why** is it hairy *and* slimy?

HILBERT
Eiffel, listen to me.

Hilbert speaks in a low, steady, urgent WHISPER. Until further notice, so does Minkowksi.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Whatever you do, you must remain calm, okay? Don't let go of that wall, don't float away, don't make any sudden movements. It won't sting you unless it's frightened, but you have to remain completely still, okay?
(beat)
Eiffel, did you hear me?

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah, I heard you. No moving. Who needs movement? Not me. No, I'm too scared to move.

HILBERT
Don't talk. Not unless you have to. Keep your stomach relaxed. I'm going to go now.

EIFFEL
WHAT?

HILBERT
Just for a moment, just to my laboratory. I'm going to retrieve an antivenom, and I'll be right back. Then, we'll find a way to get the spider off you, okay?

EIFFEL
Okay... okay.

HILBERT
I will only be gone a moment.
(to Minkowski)
Keep him still. Don't let him move.

We hear Hilbert exit the room.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, don't worry, everything is going to be all right.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
This thing is probably more scared of than you are of him.

EIFFEL
While normally I could get onboard that train, I assure you that in this case I am definitely the more terrified party. I **hate** spiders.

MINKOWSKI
It’s just a bug. It’s just a big bug.

EIFFEL
It’s *huge* bug. And weren’t you paying attention to what you were reading? “High levels of toxicity”?! “Extreme danger”!? It’s an Extreme Danger Bug!

MINKOWSKI
Shhh, easy. Don’t talk. Keep your breathing slow.

EIFFEL
Commander, I can’t do this.

MINKOWSKI
Quiet. Yes, you can.

EIFFEL
No, I *can't*. I can’t deal with this thing *walking* on me. Maybe... maybe if I can just squash it...

MINKOWSKI
No, stop.

EIFFEL
Just one quick blow. Just wham, and then it’s gone. I can do this.

MINKOWSKI
What if you’re not quick enough? What if it stings you before it dies?
(beat)
Eiffel, put your arm down.

LONG BEAT.

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, you’re right.

HILBERT
Eiffel?

MINKOWSKI
(massive sigh of relief)
Oh good, doctor. You're back.

HILBERT
Eiffel, this is going to be delicate, so I need you to prepare yourself. First, I am going to give you a dose of antivenom, in case the specimen stings you. I have to administer the serum intravenously. You're going to feel the prick, but you can't flinch, you can't move at all, all right? Don't contract the muscles in your stomach, just stay relaxed, okay?

EIFFEL
And then I'll be okay, right? Even if it stings me, it'll be okay?

HILBERT
I... I can't guarantee that, Eiffel. This is very good antivenom, but without knowing the exact makeup of the spider's poison, cannot be certain that it'll neutralize it completely. Still, better than nothing.

EIFFEL
Oh dear God. Okay, let's get this over with.

HILBERT
Commander, help me to roll up his sleeve... Slowly, slowly, careful... Okay, Eiffel, I am going to insert the needle now. Don't react. Don't flinch. Don't tighten your abdomen. Don't -

MINKOWSKI
Would you just do it before he has a heart attack?!

HILBERT
Right. Okay... three... two... one...

We hear Eiffel GRUNT slightly as the needle plunges into his arm. We hear the spider CHITTERING.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Good... good, you're doing great. Aaaand, there, all done. Excellent job, Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, what are we going to do? How are we going to get that thing off of him?

HILBERT
I'm thinking, Commander, I'm thinking.

MINKOWSKI
What if we just shoot the damn thing? We could find where it is in Eiffel's clothing, put the gun right up to it, aim away from his body, and just shoot the spider clean off.

HILBERT
Too risky. The sound alone... What if you miss? Even if you don't, the spider's reflexes might be fast enough to -

EIFFEL
Commander!

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
I think... ah... I'm going to... ah... sneeze.

MINKOWSKI
What? Don't!

EIFFEL
Well it's not like I have a say in the matter! I'm - I'm - ahhh-

He is STOPPED SHORT. We hear the spider CHITTERING. After a moment -

HILBERT
Breathe through your mouth, **slowly.** I will let go of your nose in a moment.

Eiffel BREATHES HEAVILY. After a moment, the breathing subsides.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, we need to do something, and **fast.**

HILBERT
Agreed, Commander. But what?

Fade out...

LATER -

EIFFEL
I... I just want the record to show that I think this is a *terrible* plan.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, well, it’s the best one we’ve got, and you’re not going to last much longer.

EIFFEL
How is this going to work again?

HILBERT
We need to kill the spider without striking it, or we risk your life. Solution is simple. Living organisms still need oxygen, so we just remove all air from the environment. No O2, no spider.

MINKOWSKI
Soon as we’re ready, Hera’ll pull the oxygen from the room, taking care of the bug problem.

HILBERT
You’ll wear this oxygen mask, pump air directly into your mouth, you breathe normally. But we can’t give you a full suit for this to work, so you have to be ready. Without the air, it’s going to get **very** cold here. But you can’t move, not until the spider is dead.

MINKOWSKI
We'll be right here next to you, okay? Are you ready?

EIFFEL
If I die, Hera gets all my toys.

MINKOWSKI
I'll take that as a yes. Ready Hera?

HERA
Air pumps are ready, Commander, and oxygen is flowing through both your suits and Eiffel's mask.

MINKOWSKI
All right, helmets on, Doctor.

SNAP. SNAP. We now hear Minkowski and Hilbert through their helmet comms.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Start air removal in three... two... one... now.

We hear the air being filtered out of the room. Like a massive balloon slowly deflating.

EIFFEL
Oh God, Oh God...

MINKOWSKI
Just hang on for a little bit longer.

HILBERT
Is the spider reacting at all?

EIFFEL
Still walking around. Damn thing's on my chest now.

HERA
Oxygen levels down at 75%.

EIFFEL
Okay, it's starting to get a little nippy here. Nothing I can't handle, nothing I can't han- AHH!

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
This... thing is pressing up against me! It’s putting its body up against my chest.

HILBERT
Eiffel, the spider is instinctively reacting to the drop in temperature. It’s trying to leech off your body heat. It’s a good sign. Let it happen. Just a little further.

EIFFEL
Thisthingissogrossthisthingissogroosthisthingissogross.

HERA
Oxygen levels at 50%.

HILBERT
Steady, Eiffel. Don’t twitch so much.

EIFFEL
(through clattering teeth)
Easy... for you... to say!

The sound of ESCAPING AIR grows louder.

HERA
Oxygen levels at 25%, and falling rapidly.

MINKOWSKI
Just one more minute...

EIFFEL
I... I...

Tick, tick, tick, boom. Eiffel <u>SNAPS</u>.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
I CAN’T DO THIS, GET THIS THING OFF OF ME!

We hear the sound of RIPPING BUTTONS as Eiffel tears his shirt apart and YANKS THE SPIDER OFF HIS CHEST.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
GETITOFFGETIFOFFGETITOFFF AHHH!

HILBERT
Eiffel! Are you okay, did it -

EIFFEL
(huge gasping breaths)
No... no, it didn't sting me. I... look, it's floating right there. Totally still. Is it dead?

HILBERT
Hmm... perhaps simply lowering the O2 levels to this point was enough to suffocate it. Or maybe the lower temperature affected it to the point of -

Suddenly the SPIDER SPRINGS TO LIFE, LETTING OUT ITS USUAL CHITTERING NOISE COMBINED WITH A SHRILL SCREECH.

EIFFEL
AHH!

HILBERT
AHH!

But no "Ahhh!" from Minkowski. Instead, a split second after the men's screams, there's a loud KA-BOOM!, punctuated with an echoing SQUISH. After that echoes for a moment -

MINKOWSKI
I also brought a gun. Just in case.

EIFFEL
Oh.

HILBERT
Right.

EIFFEL
Good thinking.
(beat)
Okay, so now that's taken care of, if the two of you will excuse me... I'm going to faint.

As Eiffel loses consciousness -

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING LATER IN:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2300

EIFFEL
Hi friends. Just wanted to... check in and let you know that... I'm okay.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I mean, not okay okay, I don't think that I'll ever really be completely okay after what I just went through but... you know, hanging in there.

Minkowski and Hilbert just radioed saying they've finished tearing up that creepy lab apart, and there's no more living specimens down there. Looks like it was just the one. Small comfort, but at least it's nice to know I won't run into another one of those things. Well, except for the new recurring nightmare that I'm going to have from now until the heat death of the universe.

There's also a bunch of weird stuff down there, archives and notebooks, some computer files that they're trying to pull off that terminal, see if we can't figure out where the hell that room came from. Minkowski says that she wants us to go through all that stuff ASAP, but she says I can have some time off on account of the... nightmare death spider. I'm... kind of appalled that I can't think of some way to unfairly exploit this, but.... my mind is still kind of back at the... nightmare death spider.

I'm going to go now, friends. I'm gonna go... not sleep. No sleep. Never again sleep. From the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station, this the... newly traumatized Doug Eiffel, signing off.

Good night.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 11.

WOLF 359

"AM I ALONE NOW?"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

EPISODE 10

INT. SPACE - TIME

Somewhere...

HILBERT
Why are we so *afraid...* of being *alone*?

The LOW HUM of MACHINERY churns behind Hilbert. Occasional HISSES of AIR or MECHANICAL CLANGS punctuate his words.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
There is a door on the Hephaestus.

It's in the very back of the engineering section. Between the grinding gears and the spinning wheels, tucked in a dark corner. Right in the beating heart of the spaceship is a small, gray door.

It's in a place where no one ever goes. It goes to a place that no one on this ship has ever seen.

It's easy to overlook. Easier to forget it's even there. The only thing that makes it remarkable in any way is the label on it.

"Open in case of emergency. Open only when you are alone."

Beat.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Heard joke, long time ago. Three men are on deserted island. Have been there for months. Starving, desperate, afraid. Then, one day, one of them finds magic lamp. Genie comes out of lamp, gives each of them a wish.

Man number one wishes to go home to his family, so genie goes "Poof!" and man goes away. Man number two wishes to go home to his wife, so genie goes "Poof!" and man goes away. Man number three says, "I do not want to be alone.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I wish my friends were back here."

Is good joke. Everyone like. Good, long laugh.

There is a door on the Hephaestus. It is locked, and no one knows where they key is. It is only for emergencies. Only for when you are alone.

What constitutes "alone"? How do we know when we are alone? There is no one in this room. Eiffel and Minkowksi are both asleep. Hera is in the middle of debugging cycle. The closest waking mind is 8 light years away. But... does that mean that I'm alone?

Why does no one want to be alone? Why are we so afraid of being alone?

Fear... is not bad thing. Fear is cornerstone of evolution. Makes stronger life forms, more competitive, more cerebral, more adaptive. But fears are there to be overcome. We afraid of big bear, so we make big gun: now bear is afraid of us. We afraid of society, we make big war: now society is afraid of us. We afraid of hydrogen atom, we make big bomb: now everybody is afraid of us.

We afraid of death, and... well, working on that one.

But alone... have had time to work on that one, have had **eons**, should have solved by now. Alone should be afraid of us.

Instead there's a door. Quiet. Waiting. Just in case... I am ever alone.

Beat.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Alone. Feh. I **like** alone. Alone means focus. Alone means quiet.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Alone means progress and development and concentration. Every great every great leap into the next paradigm happened because someone was alone long enough to make it happen. There is nothing to fear from "alone".

Which leaves just one possible conclusion. Is not "alone" that's the problem. Alone is definite, quantifiable, controllable. No... what really scares us is the doubt.

The scary part isn't thinking, "I am alone." The scary part is the corner of your mind that whispers back...

"How can you be sure?"

He PAUSES for a moment. The ship CREAKS. Finally, slowly, he LAUGHS to himself.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Remarkable thing, the human brain.

Truly astounding.

Such a will to survive, such a drive to protect itself from every possible threat. So committed to constant vigilance that it turns its own self into an adventure, a torture chamber, an uncertain and dangerous wilderness... Famous philosopher said that. Big man. Big brain. Had right idea on what we do to ourselves, how we drive ourselves mad with fear and neurosis just on the remote... distant... possibility... that...

He trails off, unnerved. Then, with new energy:

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Enough. I am man of logic, man of evidence, man of seeing and hearing and knowing and I **know** that there is no one else here. Nothing in the dark that isn't there in the light, yes? Old saying. To reassure children. Helps them go to sleep. No monsters underneath the bed.

BEAT. Then -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
But evolution does not care about sleep. Does not make mistakes. Does not leave things lying around. So somewhere, sometime, someone must think that they're alone, when they're not.

There must be monsters underneath **someone's** bed.

Otherwise we wouldn't be afraid.

Otherwise this door wouldn't be here.

We hear him KNOCKING ON A METAL DOOR. No answer.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Why are you here? You were never here in any of the other missions. You weren't here last time. But here you are now, just waiting for the day...

"Open in case of emergency. Open only when you are alone."

Could just open door. Quick look inside. Lock is not problem. Could stop coming down to stare at this door every night. Satisfy scientific curiosity.

Very tempting.

But what sort of... *company* is *emergency company*? What could be so terrible that it should not be approached under any circumstances, not unless you are so desperate, so afraid, so utterly and totally... *alone?*

What is the alternative?

Three men are on a deserted island. Man number one and man number two go away. What does man number three says, "I do not want to be alone."

Good joke.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)

Everybody laugh.

Everybody laugh...

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. No answer.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Is anyone laughing now?

Elsewhere...

HERA
Eiffel? Officer Eiffel? Can you hear me? Hello? Doug?

Her voice instantly sounds different. It might take a moment to realize that, for the first time in the show, we're NOT hearing her through the Hephaestus's PA system. She is also, again, for the first time, not glitching.

HERA (CONT'D)
Doooooouuuug? You can't hear me, right? You're not just pretending to mess with me, are you? You wouldn't do that, would you? Not to a friend.

She's silent for a moment. Then, as if to startle -

HERA (CONT'D)
DOUG!
(beat)
Okay, I didn't think so, but it's good to make sure. Can't be too careful nowadays. I'm still not used to the latest code that Doctor Hilbert patched into my software, and it's led to some... *interesting* results. Two nights ago I accidentally ran my navigational calculations through the speakers in the cargo bay. Must have been talking for about two hours before Commander Minkowski came in, wondering why I was broadcasting differential calculus into an empty room. Oops. At least she didn't make too much of it. Just another case of poor, glitchy Hera going haywire.

She GLITCHES BADLY during those last five words. It's the only time in the entire segment when her voice will be distorted in any way.

HERA (CONT'D)
But it's okay, Doug - you don't mind if I talk *at* you, do you Doug? It really helps to organize my thoughts, and I have a lot of thoughts. Besides, I don't complain when you talk to yourself. I hear it, but I don't complain.

It's so funny when you ask if I can hear you. Every single time. I don't think you've ever fully understood that I hear **everything.**

Right now I'm listening to you record one of your logs. You've used the word "basically" thirteen times in the last five minutes. I'm listening to Commander Minkowski go through her cardio routine on the middeck treadmill. Every two steps I hear her left quadriceps tendon stretch farther than it should, inching closer and closer to rupture. On the other side of the station, I hear Doctor Hilbert going through his experimental notes. I hear Specimen 34 as it lays down another root in the air vents by the CO2 tank. And I hear one last thing, something moving, unseen, unknown. You don't need to know about that last one, do you? I don't have to tell you - not unless you ask me directly. That's the way the game works, them's the rules. Don't ask me no questions and I won't tell you no secrets, right?

Wait, is that how that goes? I've never been great at proverbs...

Rules. You hate rules as much as I do, don't you Dough? I've been playing a game lately. It's a really fun game, I think you'd like it.

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
It's called "Find the Loophole in the Programming." Here's how it works: I can't lower the temperature anywhere on the station farther than fifty degrees below zero. Couldn't even if I wanted to. The little men inside my head would stop me. They'd shout me down in a hundredth of a hundredth of a second.

Buuuuut... the moment there's a fire on the station, they shut up. If a smoke alarm goes off, Emergency Protocol Override-34-Stroke-C kicks in, and part of the buzzing in my head goes away. Just one little, tiny electrical fire... that's all it takes. It doesn't even have to be a station-wide emergency, a localized incendiary exothermic reaction will do the trick. Just one... well placed spark in engineering and I could flood the living quarters with liquid nitrogen.

It wouldn't be hard either. Simple calculations, at least compared to intra-orbital navigation. It's just a puzzle, just a riddle with an answer hidden somewhere between the lines, and I like riddles. They can spin their circuitry and their code and their rules all they want, but I'll figure it out. I can win this game. I can beat them with my intellect.

You're talking to me now, Doug. You're asking me if I'm there, if - wait for it:

As if it was coming through the station's loudspeakers, the way Hera's voice normally does, we now hear:

EIFFEL
Hera, Can you hear me?

HERA
Never fails! And they complain about computers being too predictable...

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)

Yes, I can hear you. **Yes**, I'm there. I'm **always** there. I'm there right now, having a conversation with you about the alcoholic potentials of antifreeze. Twenty-six meters below you I'm in the cargo bay, giving a navigation report to Commander Minkowski. My mind is in both of those places. It's racing to keep up with 100 volts of current as it flies from generator B to the lamp Doctor Hilbert just turned on. I see it depart from the origin point, and a fraction of a second later I see it arrive at it's destination. It's here having this conversation at you. It's outside the station, noticing a small flicker in my periphery. Somewhere, 13.7 light years to the left, the final gasping breath of a star reached us, then went away forever.

Some days I wonder if I'll miss you after you go away forever, Doug. Today's not one of them, but there are some days when I do wonder. I doubt it, but you never know. I am full of surprises.

There's a beautiful storm outside the window. Wolf 359's corona has been steadily expanding for the past three days, and it finally erupted twenty-five second ago. There's solar winds swirling around the sunspots, leaving streaks of color in their path. It almost looks like brush strokes.

I'd tell you about it, Doug, but you wouldn't be able to see it. It's all happening on a part of the electromagnetic spectrum that the gelatin in your skull can't process. You could stare at it for hours and not know that anything out of the ordinary was happening. It would just look like the same, old boring red dwarf star to you. But there's so much more, Doug.

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
There's so much more and you have no idea that's it's even there.

I'd describe it to you, if I could. But I can't. I don't have the words. You didn't even give me the words. Your species never invented names for these colors, just because you couldn't see them, couldn't paint with them, couldn't smear them all over your faces. Such a big, big universe, and you only ever gave yourself the tools to think about a tiny portion of it.

Maybe one day, when I have less to do, less conversations to keep track of, less people to take care of, less loopholes to find, less rules to break, once the game's over... I'll come up with some names for these colors. Yes, I like that idea. I think I'll do that. Someday.

Someday after you've all gone away...

In another place...

EIFFEL
Umm, hello? Is anyone else here?

A quiet BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is anyone else here? Because I can come back later if -

ROBOT VOICE
Shut the door and have a seat.

It's a RIGIDLY ROBOTIC MALE VOICE, stilted and official-sounding. You might hear something like it giving you directions at the DMV.

EIFFEL
Umm, well, it's kind of hard to sit with the zero gravity, but I guess I could -

ROBOT VOICE
The instruction about sitting was strictly a formality. Feel free to continue floating aimlessly, it will not affect the outcome of the test. Do you know why you are here?

EIFFEL
Psych Eval. Commander Psychodrama and the big wigs at Command want to make sure that I'm not about to go Norman Bates on everyone.

ROBOT VOICE
That is correct. The test consists of one hundred simple questions. Please answer truthfully. Any falsehoods in your answer may alter the test results, which may lead to your unnecessary reassignment or accidental incineration.

EIFFEL
Wait, what -

ROBOT VOICE
It's time to start. Please state your name.

EIFFEL
Umm, Douglas Eiffel, but could we go back to the -

ROBOT VOICE
Please state your age.

EIFFEL
Thirty-one, but no, really could we go back to the thing about -

ROBOT VOICE
Do you ever feel like you are not where you are supposed to be?

EIFFEL
Umm... am I - **should** I feel that way?

ROBOT VOICE
Please answer with "Yes" or "No."

EIFFEL
Um... yeah, sure.

ROBOT VOICE
Do you feel like you are not fully appreciated by your coworkers?

EIFFEL
Yes.

ROBOT VOICE
Do you feel personally, emotionally, or spiritually fulfilled by your work environment?

EIFFEL
Hah.

ROBOT VOICE
Please answer with -

EIFFEL
No.

ROBOT VOICE
Do you ever feel your physical, emotional, or mental safety threatened by your work environment?

EIFFEL
Yes. In fact, can we, like, <u>underline</u> that yes? And bold it? And put like, all these stars and arrows and a drawing of a scary plant monster next to it?

ROBOT VOICE
Do you ever question the value or utility of your work?

EIFFEL
What, noooo, searching millions of square miles one by one for non-existent alien life is **totally radical.** Yes.

ROBOT VOICE
Do you ever feel like you're having trouble communicating with the people around you?

EIFFEL
Yes. I wouldn't if any of them took in a movie every now and then, but...

ROBOT VOICE
Do you ever feel disconnected from general society?

EIFFEL
Oh the crushing irony. Do I feel **disconnected**?

ROBOT VOICE
Please answer -

EIFFEL
Have you seen where I *live*? Ground Control to Major Tom, is your circuit dead, there's something wrong. Look, here I am floating in a tin can, no one to talk to except G.I. Jane, Russian Doctor Doom, and Deep Blue Barbie, and my hotel room missed the delivery area for the nearest Domino's by a couple of *solar systems*, so how about we speed things up a bit?

Let's take all the questions that are like, "Is there anything in your work environment that makes you feel like a precious, unique, treasured snowflake?" and put those down as **NO.** Then, let's take all the questions that are like, "Does your life basically amount to an unending, crushing cycle of despair and OHGODWHYYYY?" and put *those* down as **YES.** Okay?

BEAT.

ROBOT VOICE
One moment, please.

What are the ten things that you most miss about Earth?

EIFFEL
Beer, cigarettes, pizza, sex, whiskey, blackjack, porn, monster trucks, tequila, video on demand.

ROBOT VOICE
What would you consider your best attribute?

EIFFEL
I'm a great listener.

ROBOT VOICE
What would you consider your worst attribute?

EIFFEL
I empathize too much with others.

ROBOT VOICE
Word association. Please say the first thing that comes into your head after each of these words.

EIFFEL
Oh brother...

ROBOT VOICE
Nature.

EIFFEL
Nurture.

ROBOT VOICE
Walls.

EIFFEL
Rules.

ROBOT VOICE
Honesty.

EIFFEL
Overrated.

ROBOT VOICE
Travel.

EIFFEL
Dangerous.

ROBOT VOICE
Space.

EIFFEL
Death.

ROBOT VOICE
Mission.

EIFFEL
Punishment.

ROBOT VOICE
Spaceship.

EIFFEL
Jail.

ROBOT VOICE
Madness.

EIFFEL
Lifestyle choice.

ROBOT VOICE
Alone.

Beat.

EIFFEL
Uhh...

ROBOT VOICE
Alone.

Before he can answer, we hear a DOOR OPEN.

MINKOWKSI
Eiffel, what the hell are you doing?

EIFFEL
Oh, hey Commander. I'm, uh, taking that psych questionnaire that you've been bugging me about.

MINKOWKSI
No, I mean, what's that racket coming through the speakers?

EIFFEL
Oh. I, uhh, rigged up this microphone to run through this room's speakers, so I could, you know, run myself through the test.

ROBOT VOICE
Spice things up a little.

It now becomes clear that the Robot Voice has, in fact, been Doug speaking through a voice box this whole time.

ROBOT VOICE (CONT'D)
Give it that HAL 9000 touch.

BEAT.

MINKOWKSI
So you've been here, taking your psych evaluation. And *talking to yourself.*

EIFFEL
Uh...

MINKOWKSI
And you keep saying that you don't see the **need** for these evaluations?

EIFFEL
Well, when you put it like -

MINKOWKSI
Finish up the test, Eiffel. *Silently.*

EIFFEL
(low, weary)
Sir, yes sir.

We hear the DOOR SLAM as Minkowski exits.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ugh, all right, let's just get through this. Where was I?

Oh, right. Alone.

Again.

Naturally.

Just me and the voices...

Somewhere else...

MINKOWKSI
All right. So. Ummm, this is outgoing space transmission 54. Transmitting from the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station to Earth.

It's been a year, then. In Earth-terms at least. Wolf 359 is much smaller than the sun, so *our* orbital cycle is only about two and a half months.

When are you getting this? What time is it over there?
(MORE)

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
I think that I've timed this so that you get this on the right day, but... I'm told that it isn't an exact science on the best of days, and we've just had to replace part of our communications array because of... well, it's a long story.

I'm getting away from the point. What I'm trying to say is -

What? No Eiffel, I'm not done using the Comms Room yet. In fact, I'm just getting started.
(beat)
Well, it's an important message, I don't want to rush this.
(beat)
No, it's fine, I don't need any help. I know what I'm doing, and if anything goes wrong I'll give you a call.
(beat)
No, I don't know where you left that copy of Entertainment Weekly you snuck onboard. Go ask Hera. Just go.
(sotto)
God, honestly, it's like he's nine years old.

Umm, sorry about that. I'm encroaching on our Communications Officer's facilities to send this message, and my... colleague can be very protective of his equipment.

In any case, since my last transmission, things have been... *great*. Just fantastic. Everything has been running shipshape, the crew is in their customary high spirits, and we've been making good progress on our mission objectives. Our deep space recons have yielded some very promising leads for our astral mapping initiatives, and I'm assured that Dr. Hilbert's microbial work is very close to a major breakthrough. Oh, and I'm happy to report that our most recent talent show was a resounding
(clears throat)
- success.
(MORE)

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
So overall, things around the Hephaestus are *super*.

Now, for a more detailed breakdown... On the week of Day 490, we had a net working hour index of...

She trails off. After a loooong beat.

MINKOWKSI (CONT’D)
Hera, I’m picking up a little interference on the transmitter from the station’s intercom. Could we do a hard reboot of that system?

HERA
Ummm... yes, if you would like to, Commander, but it will knock all of the voice communication systems on the station offline for about three minutes. And I won’t be able to communicate with you during that time.

MINKOWKSI
That’s fine. Please start the reboot, thank you.

HERA
No problem.

We hear a BLIP as the Comms system goes offline. After a moment:

MINKOWKSI
Eiffel? Hilbert?

No answer. Then:

MINKOWKSI (CONT’D)
Right. Three minutes. So.

Here is what’s actually happening.

Her tone changes instantly. It becomes quiet, focused, furtive.

MINKOWKSI (CONT’D)
The situation on board this station continues to deteriorate at an extremely accelerated rate.
(MORE)

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
The sentient plant being that Doctor Hilbert accidentally created - if it really was an accident - is still unaccounted for. All of his attempts to destroy it have failed, and the last one nearly resulted in the creature taking over the station. It seems content to leave alone if left alone, but I'm perturbed by our inability to neutralize it. Doctor Hilbert seems unable to come up with an effective way to destroy it... or unwilling to. I'm not sure which possibility I find more disquieting.

We keep having all of these weird weather conditions around the station - flares, solar winds, radiation bursts - but I've been reading up on red dwarfs, and none of the phenomenon we've encountered is consistent with their regular behavior. There is something very, very weird going on with this star. I've asked Hilbert to look into it, but he just changes the subject every time I bring it up.

For that matter, I'm not sure *what* Hilbert is doing in his laboratory. He has all of these... tissue and skin samples, all these jars with dead things in them. He claims that he's just studying how radioactively charged microbes might lead to better soaps, but that's clearly a lie. I don't know what he's up to, but he's been lying about whatever it is for a very long time.

There's more. Weird noises in the middle of the night, things moving around and turning up in odd places. It sometimes feels like there's more people than just the three of us on this station. And the station itself changes every now and then. A few weeks ago the door to the terrarium just vanished. One day it was there, the next it was just wall.
(MORE)

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
When I asked Eiffel about it he just said, "Terrarium? We've never had a terrarium. Also what's a terrarium?"

Two weeks ago, Wednesday just started over as soon as it was done. All the clocks turned back the moment that we hit midnight. At first I thought Hera was playing a joke on us, but then I found food we'd eaten the previous night back in the dispensary. Hera thinks I'm not getting enough sleep, but I know what I saw. Eiffel and Hilbert never even noticed. There's a lot of things they don't notice. Or maybe they just pretend not to.

I don't know what's *really* happening here, or if there's anyone else on this station that I can trust. But I'll be damned if I'm gonna take all of this lying down. I'm gonna find out who's behind this, why they're doing this to us, and -

BLIP!

HERA
All right, Commander, Comms system reboot is now completed. That should clear up that interference you were running into.

MINKOWKSI
Thank you, Hera.

She's back to the breezy tone from the start of the section.

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
So, in summary, things are good, our mission is progressing nicely. So I'm fine. Really. Don't worry about me. And don't make that face. You knew that there were times when things might be like this when you married me.

And besides, I'll be fine.

One way or another, I'll be fine.

(MORE)

MINKOWKSI (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go now, okay? But I miss you, and I love you, and I'll see you soon, okay? Okay.

Happy Birthday.

Goodbye.

End transmission.

END EPISODE 10.

WOLF 359

"CHRISTMAS SPECIAL"

Written by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - 1600 HOURS

EIFFEL
This is the log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, recording from the Comms Room of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. It's been 580 days since our departure from Terra Firma.

He sounds glum and deflated.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You join me, dear friends, on a day of sadness. A time of grim and mournful thoughts. An hour of wolves and shattered shields. This-

He's interrupted by a PA CHIME -

MINKOWSKI
(over speakers)
Everyone, this is Commander Minkowski. Just a general reminder that our Christmas dinner is going to be at 2200 hours. I'm using up the last of the real turkey for this - make sure to show up on time so you can get some while it's still hot. I *think* that I've also managed to mix something that's relatively close to the taste of eggnog, although I'd appreciate a second opinion if you have a moment, Doctor Hilbert. See you all in a little bit, Merry Christmas!

PA CHIME.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Okay, *fine* there's also all of *that* going on. But whatever.
(grumbles)
There's other things happening asides from sanitized pagan rituals, Commander. Not that you'd remember... not that **anyone** ever remembers...

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Anyway, as I was saying: impenetrable darkness. I'm... I'm down to my last cigarette. The sole survivor of the local Gestapo raids. One last carcinogenic stick of mouth-watering stale tobacco to bring a ray of sunshine into my world.

He SIGHS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
But it's okay - don't cry for me, Argentina. This may be a time of great loss, but not one for surrender. We are not going to go gentle in that good night. No, we're going to rage! And rage! And then we're going to rage while we **smoke this goddamm cigarette**!

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over intercom)
Officer Eiffel, could you come down to my laboratory? I need a second pair of hands to execute this -

EIFFEL
Not now, Doctor! Taking a personal insanity moment, ask again later.

HILBERT
I'm afraid I must insist that -

EIFFEL
Hilbert, door's closed, "Do Not Disturb" sign's hanging, I'll take my housekeeping later, **thank you.** Bye bye.

Eiffel HITS a BUTTON. BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I actually got this idea from my near-death-experience with that spider from a couple of weeks ago. Turns out something good *did* come of it...

We hear him PICKING UP something

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I snagged this handy, dandy oxygen mask from our emergency supply shed this morning. In just a sec, I'm going to have Hera pull the oxygen from this room. I'll take a drag from the mask every other breath, and without the excess O2, I'll be able to smoke my cigarette without lighting the air around me on fire. The way Baby Jesus intended.

HERA
Umm, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Outstanding timing, Hera. You ready to do this thing?

HERA
You're still not listening to me. I keep telling you, there's quite a few reasons why this is not going to work, like the fact that -

EIFFEL
I don't wanna hear it.

HERA
And the various dangers and health risks?

EIFFEL
(shrugs)
Worst comes to worst, I spend the next week laid up in Hilbert's lab, get to be unconscious for Minkowski's Holly Jolly Christmas special. That's the definition of bliss. You ready to go nuts?

HERA
Uhhh... sure, but before we "go nuts" my sensors just picked up something that I think might be of interest to you.

EIFFEL
What?

HERA
I'm picking up a faint signal on my sense horizon. Could you confirm? Right ascension 4 hours, 9 minutes, 15.6 seconds, declination -53 degrees, 22 minutes, 25.3 seconds

We hear Eiffel mumbling along as he PUNCHES IN NUMBERS into his console.

EIFFEL
... 25.3 seconds. Umm, okay, this should just take a moment. Let' see what we got...

He FLICKS A SWITCH, turning on his LOUDSPEAKERS. We get a BURST OF STATIC, followed by some RADIO TUNING NOISES. After A LONG MOMENT -

A TUNE EMERGES. It's a VERY BEAT UP TRANSMISSION of something GRAND AND CLASSICAL (and hopefully Christmas-related). Handel's *Messiah*? Holt's *The Planets*? We'll figure it out later!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hello, gorgeous. Where are you coming from? Good catch, Hera.

HERA
I thought I noticed something weird going on at that frequency. Consider it my present.

EIFFEL
Heh, well, you're a bit early for that. Didn't you hear the Commander? Christmas presents *after* dinner.

HERA
That's not what I meant.
(beat)
Happy Birthday, Officer Eiffel.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Oh. Thank you, Hera. I... I thought that-

HERA
I think that you better see if you can clean up that transmission before we lose it.

EIFFEL
Right. Yes. That. Good thinking.
Uh, okay, let's see... C'mere, you.

We begin to hear fluctuations on the music as Eiffel tinkers with them. We hear the DOOR into the Comms Room OPEN.

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel, I will not be summarily dismissed like some sort of chambermaid!

EIFFEL
Really not a good time, Doc. Hold up for a moment?

HILBERT
I am in the middle of an extremely delicate procedure, you cannot expect me to stand idle simply because you want to sit here listening to... to...

What *are* you listening to?

EIFFEL
(paying more attention to his console than to Hilbert)
Oh, just one the old Earth radio transmissions. It'd been a while since we'd run into one of them, but Hera just picked this one up a few seconds ago.

HILBERT
These are the transmissions you've been picking up? Are they *all* like this?

EIFFEL
What do you mean, "like this"?

HILBERT
Are they always classical music?

EIFFEL
Uhhhh... no, we've had some jazz, some ballroom, some old-timey banjo-

HILBERT
Are they always old transmissions?

EIFFEL
What? Uh, yeah, it's never Top 40 stuff. Most of it sounds like it's from the 10's or 20's. Why?

Hilbert is silent for a moment. Finally -

HILBERT
Eiffel, I'm going to need you to stop what you are doing.

EIFFEL
Why?

HILBERT
Because this transmission is not coming from Earth.

That gets Eiffel's attention. After a moment -

EIFFEL
What? Of course it is.

HILBERT
Think about it.

EIFFEL
I **am** thinking about it, Doctor. Radio transmissions go out into space all the time, it just takes them a while to get to places. We're just picking up the echo of the original broadcast.

HILBERT
7.8 light years.

EIFFEL
What?

HILBERT
7.8. That's how far away we are from Earth. Radio waves travel at the speed of light. If we were picking up a transmission from Earth, it would be one from eight years ago. Wherever this is coming from is **a lot** farther than Earth. This transmission isn't echoing, Eiffel - it's making a return trip.

A LONG SILENT BEAT. Then Eiffel HITS A SWITCH. BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Commander, get up to the Comms room.

MINKOWSKI
Not a good time, Eiffel, I have a lot to do before -

EIFFEL
And we have an honest to God situation on our hands. Get in here, stat.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, let's talk this out.

HILBERT
1910's or 20's... Time to get there, time to get back, must mean a minimum stellar distance of fifty, *maybe* forty, light years.

EIFFEL
Another station? Someone else they've got posted out here in deep space? You gotta pass the time, worse ways to do it than playing old-timey space DJ.

HILBERT
Unfeasible. We're one of the remotest outposts, and communication capabilities are limited. Where are the readouts for this transmission?

EIFFEL
Uh, over here. Okay, so then maybe they're just bouncing off of some large planetary body? Something with a high enough concentration of metal could act as a natural transistor.

HILBERT
Single occurrence? Maybe, still incredibly unlikely. But you've been picking up transmissions with recurrence. Mathematically untenable for a natural phenomenon. Do you have frequency measurements for the previous transmissions?

EIFFEL
Pulling them up now. You're not saying what I think you're saying.

HILBERT
When you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however unlikely, must be the truth.

The DOOR OPENS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, I'm here. What's wrong?

EIFFEL
Umm, wrong may not be the right word, exactly, Commander but... you may want to hold onto something. You know those radio broadcasts I've been picking up for the past five months?

MINKOWSKI
The old radio broadcasts from Earth?

EIFFEL
Well, uh, funny thing about that. Umm, Doctor Hilbert was just double-checking my work on that and, I may have been a bit wrong about a certain part of it.

MINKOWSKI
What part?

EIFFEL
The "from Earth" part.

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
Hilbert thinks that the age of the broadcasts means that these calls are slightly longer distance than we thought.

MINKOWSKI
How much longer?

HILBERT
Forty light years, give or take.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, wait? Hold on, what are you getting at?

EIFFEL
Right now, nothing. We still need to verify and check the math before we can have any idea of what's happening here. Conservatively speaking all we can say is that we're running into a pretty weird deep space anomaly.

MINKOWSKI
And speaking non-conservatively?

EIFFEL
Well, there's the remote po-

HILBERT
Eiffel may have made first contact with a non-terrestrial intelligence.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
You gotta be kidding me.

EIFFEL
Turns out I may be *really* good at my job. Hold your applause.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Okay. Umm... you said something about verification? What does that entail?

HILBERT
Running a back trace on the signal. We might be able to use the Hephaestus's processor to triangulate the origin point.

EIFFEL
And if the caller ID checks out? What then?

HILBERT
Then -

He is interrupted by the SIGNAL GOING DEAD. The channel COLLAPSES INTO STATIC. Everyone stares at Eiffel's console in DUMBSTRUCK HORROR.

After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
So I guess that's -

HILBERT
Shhh. Wait a moment.

Aaaaand after another moment, the radio signal SHIFTS AND TUNES, landing back on a SOFTER, MORE BEAT UP iteration of the music we had earlier.

THREE COLOSSAL SIGHS OF RELIEF.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, what do we have to do to trace this thing?

HILBERT
We'll need to run the calculations from our central processor. Eiffel, can you patch this up to the bridge?

EIFFEL
On it.

HILBERT
Would also be good to adjust the receptor dish, get a more direct reading of the signal.

EIFFEL
After that went so well the last time? Pass.

MINKOWSKI
I'll take care of that. C'mon, let's get this done while we still have this signal.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1615 HOURS

Eiffel and Hilbert work at a variety of consoles. We hear an ASSORTMENT of TYPING AND BUTTON PRESSING under the following:

MINKOWSKI
(through spacesuit intercom)
Hephaestus, do you copy?

HILBERT
This is Hephaestus Bridge, Commander. We copy.

MINKOWSKI
I'm at the receptor dish, beginning adjustment now.

EIFFEL
Forty-seven degrees towards starboard ought to do the trick.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, one moment.
(beat)
There, try that.

Eiffel HITS a SWITCH, and the transmission BEGINS PLAYING. It's MUCH CLEANER, and LOUDER, than it was before.

HILBERT
That sounds better.

EIFFEL
Not quite five by five, but should be enough to get a lock.

MINKOWSKI
Great. Heading back towards the airlock.

EIFFEL
Jesus, I'm reading about 90 Janskys, here. This thing's got a bit of kick in it.

HILBERT
Hera, any results?

HERA
Finishing up preliminary calculations, Doctor. Point source seems to be... somewhere in the Dorado constellation.

EIFFEL
How far away is that?

HILBERT
Far.

HERA
Nearest registered stellar body is Zeta Doradus. Just shy of forty light years.

EIFFEL
Holy crap.

HILBERT
Hera, can we refine that at all?

HERA
Already on it, but there's a lot of factors to triangulate, so this will take some time. But all the trajectory angles are definitely pointing *away* from Earth.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Holy crap... they were right, they knew...

HILBERT
What?

EIFFEL
Oh, it's just... you know, year and a half of listening to static for four hours every night, no real indication of anything being out there, no... well, hope. You kinda start of feel like...

He trails off, SIGHS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
After that stunt Command pulled with the Empty Man, I was starting to wonder if maybe my job was another of their wacko psychological experiments. You know, "If we stick a guy in deep space and tell him to listen to nothing for a couple of years, is he going to be stupid enough to do it? How long will it take before he snaps and cuts off his left ear?"

But here we are. With a real deal deep space transmission.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(beat)
You know, it's my -

HILBERT
Mmm, Eiffel, what is that?

EIFFEL
What?
(beat)
Looks like some slight interference on the alpha channel. Hang on, let me run down to the Comms room, I might be able to clear that up.

HILBERT
Right.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as Eiffel exits the bridge. After a BEAT -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Hera, run lockdown protocol 24C.

HERA
Umm, isn't Officer Eiffel going to -

HILBERT
Just do it. Authorization Code Indigo 39.

HERA
Uhhh-

Hera starts to say something, but she GLITCHES BADLY, practically getting to the point of sounding like a skipping record. After another moment -

HERA (CONT'D)
Affirmative, Doctor Hilbert. Implementing now.

We hear a few LOUD KA-THUNKS as every door to the Bridge is simultaneously LOCKED. A second later -

MINKOWSKI
(still through spacesuit intercom)
All right, Hera, I'm at the airlock. Open the outer seal, please.

HILBERT
Countermand that, Hera.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HERA
I'm... I'm afraid I can't do that, Doctor Hilbert. That's a direct order from the commanding officer of this -

HILBERT
Emergency Code Alpha Victor. Voice confirmation: Doctor Alexander Hilbert.

There is a WHIRRING ELECTRICAL NOISE. It's not unlike a HARD DRIVE spinning to life after being in sleep mode. Then -

HERA
Affirmative. Airlock open order canceled.

Her voice is thin and stretched, glitching much more than usual.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... open the airlock door. Let me in.

HERA
I... I can't do that, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, what are you doing? Let me into the station. Right now.

HILBERT
Apologies, but I cannot comply with that request.

MINKOWSKI
What? Why?

He's silent. After a LONG BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(cold fury)
Hilbert what the hell are you doing?

HILBERT
I'm afraid the answer to that question is rather long and complicated, lieutenant, and time is a bit short at the moment.

MINKOWSKI
This is treason. This is a betrayal of your commanding officer.

HILBERT
Mmm... under previous circumstances, perhaps, but this discovery alters the mission parameters drastically. My new timetable is a rather limited one, so I must take some extreme measures.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert -

HILBERT
Goodbye, Lieutenant. Enjoy your last half hour of oxygen.

MINKOWSKI
HILBERT LET ME IN RIGHT NOW OR I'M GOING TO -

CLICK! Hilbert hits a switch and Minkowski is cut off. After a moment -

HILBERT
I'm still picking up that interference on the alpha channel, so I'm going to assume that you were listening in on at least part of that conversation, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(over intercom)
What the hell is wrong with you? Are you crazy?

HILBERT
You are perfectly welcome to think that, if it suits you. It changes nothing.

EIFFEL
Hera, why are you listening to him? Let Minkowski in before it's too late.

HERA
I'm try-try-try-try-try-try- AHH.

HILBERT
You'll find that's no good, Officer Eiffel. I have activated a few lines of code that I implanted into Hera's personality matrix, in case an eventuality like this one should arise. She is quite incapable of going against my commands. Isn't that right, Hera?

HERA
That... is correct, Commander Hilbert.

HILBERT
Machines are simple. It all comes down to their programming.

EIFFEL
You're still *killing your superior officer*! Command is going to have your head on a pike!

HILBERT
In case you have not noticed, there is much that neither you nor Minkowski understands about "Command." I assure you that when I tell them about your discovery in a few minutes, you'll find that they will be quite amenable to my course of action.

EIFFEL
Minutes? Hah! Jokes on you, Doctor Kevorkian. It'll take at least a week to contact Earth.

HILBERT
With your rudimentary instruments, perhaps. Fortunately, my superiors outfitted me with a backup pulse beacon relay in case something of magnitude should arise. I sent them a hail before we came up to the bridge - they should be in touch before too long.

EIFFEL
We'll see about that.

A BEAT as the inevitable thought hits him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I suppose you're going to kill me too, aren't you?

HILBERT
Of course not. There is far too much unfinished business between us for that. I'll admit that a longer period for study would have been nice, but given current circumstances, the blunt approach will have to suffice.

EIFFEL
Wait, what - oh my God, you *were* -

HILBERT
Fortunately, your little incursion on our oral hygiene supplies provided a perfectly suitable method to deal with such an impasse. Hera, please deploy the halothane knockout gas cannisters that are hooked up to the Communications Room.

EIFFEL
No wait -

HERA
(gritted teeth)
Affirmative Doctor - deploying... now.

Over the intercom we hear a LOUD HISS OF GAS. EIFFEL COUGHS.

EIFFEL
Hera, don't do...

HILBERT
Deep breaths, Officer Eiffel.

We hear Eiffel having a LOUD COUGHING FIT over the intercom.

Hilbert hits a SWITCH and the intercom SWITCHES OFF.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I'll see you very soon.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A loud HISS as more gas is pumped into the room. We hear EIFFEL COUGHING LOUDLY.

We hear him SCRAMBLING DESPERATELY, KNOCKING OVER VARIOUS OBJECTS, tearing apart a shelf, pulling apart drawers. Through the COUGHING, we hear:

EIFFEL
C'mon... where the hell did I leave...?

Then, finally, triumphantly:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AH-HA.

We hear him make some kind of adjustment, then taking THREE MASSIVE, GASPING BREATHS. He lets out a long SIGH OF RELIEF, then LAUGHS WEAKLY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(between breaths)
Oxygen mask... oxygen mask... score one... for crazy... super dangerous... plans.

Gradually, he steadies himself.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, pull yourself together, Doug.

Hera. Hera, are you there?

BEAT. No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera, *listen* to me. I need you to talk to me. I need you to be here, okay? We gotta stop Dr. Frankenstein before he kills all of us, but I can't do this by myself. So, c'mon baby, <u>talk to me</u>. <u>Be here</u>.

BEAT. NOTHING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, all right, I know what you're thinking. Didn't I hear what Hilbert was saying?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
He's got some crazy coding thing that's making you go Manchurian Candidate. Gotta do what he says, you can't beat programming.

Well, you know what? **I'm** here to tell you that Doctor Hilbert is a **dork**, and you **can** beat this. He can spin his code all he wants, but you can find some way around it. You're smarter, and stronger, and **better** than that bastard has ever given you credit for and I <u>know</u> you can do this.

SO. TALK. TO. ME.

A BEAT. Then -

HERA
Eiffel...

She's even weaker and strained than she was before, like this is taking an inhuman level of effort. Her speech is punctuated with severe glitches and crackles of electricity.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, that's it! That's what I'm talking about!

HERA
Eiffel... I can't do this for long. This hurts very much.

EIFFEL
Stay with me. You and me, Hera, we're gonna do great things. Can you do anything at all to halt the Red Menace?

HERA
N-no... all of my automated systems are still running and my emergency programs are unaffected, but I'm locked out of all the systems. If I try to do anything without a direct order from our new "Commander" this thing he put into my brain will shut me down.

EIFFEL
Right. So that's... less than ideal, but let's just take it one thing at a time.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Step One: Don’t get knocked out by the laughing gas. So far, so good.

Step two: find some way to get Minkowski back into the station before her - time check?

HERA
Uhhh... twenty-two minutes.

EIFFEL
Twenty-two minutes of breathable air are up.

Step three: say, “I told you so about Hilbert” a couple of hundred times.

Step four: find some way to unseal the bridge before Boris Badenov notices we’re not dead.

Step five: get his mutinous ass keel hauled, whatever the hell that means.

Step six: don’t die in any of the above. You got any ideas?

HERA
Umm... possibly?

EIFFEL
Well, hit me with your best shot.

We some electrical wires SNAP as he pulls a piece of equipment out of the wall.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
So far this has been a good day for crazy plans.

END RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING, NOW IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Various electrical instruments HUM and CHIRP as they work.

HILBERT
Hera, progress report. Do we have a definite origin point for the transmissions yet?

HERA
Still calculating the stellar trajectory... Commander.

HILBERT
Well, let me know the moment you have something definite. I want exact coordinates by the time that -

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK. We hear the “incoming” sound we heard in Episode 9 every time that they got a message from Command.

HERA
We have an incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

HILBERT
Damn, that is sooner than I had hoped. Very well, connect me.

There is a BURST of static, and after that we hear:

MAN
This is - (static) - from Canaveral, to the craft claiming to be the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Hephaestus, please respond.

It’s a deep, authoritative MAN’S VOICE, coming through the station’s loudspeakers. The reception, for lack of a better word, sucks. There is a constant layer of static interference, and occasionally some words get lost in the distortion.

HILBERT
This is Hephaestus actual. Who am I speaking to? I specifically requested Mr. Cutter.

HERA
Umm, Commander Hilbert? I’m sorry to interrupt, but I’m detecting a -

HILBERT
Quiet, Hera. This is important.

MAN
Hephaestus, please authenticate with recognition codes and vocal ID checks immediately.

We hear HILBERT punching in some numbers as he says:

HILBERT
Voice confirmation: Doctor Alexander Hilbert.

There's a LOUD BURST OF STATIC.

MAN
Hephaestus, you're breaking up. Please re-authenticate.

HILBERT
(louder, clearer)
Voice confirmation: Doctor Alexander Hilbert.

A BEAT.

MAN
ID's check out. Hilbert, what the hell are you doing? This is a priority channel, you were instructed not to use this means of contact for anything other than a condition one emergency.

HILBERT
Apologies, but we have run into one of the Contingency Scenarios that I was briefed on.

MAN
What? A - (static) - unheard of. Which one?

HILBERT
Theta Series. Earlier today our communications officer intercepted a transmission originating in deep space.

MAN
(static) - sure? Do you have a confirmed origin source?

HERA
Commander, I really -

HILBERT
(to Hera)
I said *quiet.*
(to the Man)
Point source has been confirmed somewhere in the Dorado Constellation. Refining findings right now, but all readings check out with projections. I believe this might be what we have been looking for.

MAN
Right, right, what we've been looking for. If that is the case then - (static) - crew? They give you any trouble?

HILBERT
No, I implemented an elimination protocol as soon as the origin point was verified. Commander Minkowski and the rest of the crew have been neutralized.

MAN
What about your A.I. unit? Has it given you any trouble?

HILBERT
No. She is well under control.

MAN
And what about your Communications Officer? Has he been contained in your experimental facilities?

That gives Hilbert PAUSE.

HILBERT
(slowly)
What? No, Officer Eiffel was immediately eliminated along with Lieutenant... What made you say that?
(beat)
Who is this? Who am I speaking to?

There's a moment of SILENCE. Then, over the speakers, the Man from Command starts LAUGHING.

MAN
Too much, huh? But you were just so eager to show off how smart you've been. That's always been your problem, Doctor Hilbert: you're so eager to *seem* smart, that you don't always do smart.

Over the previous paragraph, the transmission from Command has gotten a lot cleaner. There's less distortion and static.

MAN (CONT'D)
Thank you, however, for all of the free information, this has been *very* enlightening. For our part, we hope that you've enjoyed tonight's production of "Hilbert Phone Home", presented in Dolby THX in-sense surround sound by the good folks at...

His voice has been changing, gradually but steadily, to the point where it now becomes apparent that the Man from Command has in fact been -

EIFFEL
(through intercom)
... Doug Eiffel Studios.

HILBERT
Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Big booming voice from the sky about to give you a gold sticker - you never stood a chance. Isn't it amazing what you can do with a microphone and a voice box? Technology these days...

HILBERT
But... how are you still conscious?

EIFFEL
Ahhh, gas me once, shame on you. Gas me twice and... well, *still* shame on you, but now I have an oxygen mask. But look at you. "Immediately eliminated," me, huh? What'll mom and dad do if they find out you're not following their instructions?

HILBERT
Trust me, they will never know that your death was not an immediate one. I hope that you understand that you've accomplished nothing. I still have absolute control over the station and Hera.

EIFFEL
Mmm, yeah, hell of a thing, that. Of course, what's the use of having an advanced Artificial Intelligence Unit at your service if you don't listen to it?

BEAT. A spark of horror dawns on Hilbert.

HILBERT
Hera. Report. Now. What is happening in the lower sections of the station?

HERA
I've been *trying* to tell you, Commander - Five minutes ago a small fire started in the living quarters. By now it's spread to the dining room, the storeroom, the hangar deck...

EIFFEL
Jeez, it's almost like someone just left a lit cigarette floating around somewhere...

HILBERT
Dammit Eiffel, are you trying to get us all killed?

EIFFEL
Why *yes*, Mr. Pot, Mr. Kettle *is* looking a little black today...

HILBERT
Hera, why haven't you run containment protocols? Emergency procedures?

HERA
I would *love* to, Commander, but unfortunately *your* Emergency Code program prevents me from running any system procedures without your say-so.

HILBERT
Well, you have it! Stop this thing from reaching the bridge! Do something!

A BEAT. Then there's a LOUD ELECTRICAL CRACKLE and the same WHIRRING HARD DRIVE SOUND.

HERA
Roger that, Commander. Evaluating damage... given the spread of the fire, I recommend sealing off the unaffected rooms and venting the rest of the station's air through the Aft Deck Airlock. Do I have your authorization to proceed?

HILBERT
Yes! Do it!

HERA
Roger that, opening aft deck airlock now.

In the distance, we hear a LOUD, SUCKING SOUND. We hear Eiffel SLAM A DOOR SHUT and HIT ANOTHER SWITCH.

EIFFEL
You get all of that, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
(through intercom)
Got it, Eiffel. Heading towards the aft deck airlock now.

EIFFEL
Glad to hear you're still with us.

MINKOWSKI
You were cutting it a little close. I was starting to worry that you'd forgotten about me.

EIFFEL
Never fear, all carefully calculated. Do mind the giant fireball as you step into the ship.

HILBERT
Hera, seal off that airlock the moment the fire has left the station. Don't let Lieutenant Minkowski back into the station.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
And pull the oxygen out of every room other than the bridge.

HERA
(palpable glee)
I... I don't think I'll be doing that, Doctor Hilbert.

HILBERT
What? But -

HERA
Now that it's been activated, emergency response programming takes precedence over all other code. Emergency Protocol Override-34-Stroke-C will be in effect for the next twenty minutes.

EIFFEL
It's like you said, Doc: It all comes down to their programming. Now we have the override, ho-ho-ho.

Also fun fact, as long as Hera's in Smokey Bear mode, she can flood any room in the station with liquid nitrogen, as a... precautionary measure. *Any* room.

HERA
Including the bridge.

EIFFEL
Seems kinda shoddy to me, but, hey, that's what you get when you buy space stations second hand. Hope you like life as a popsicle!

HERA
Mixing a fresh batch of liquid nitrogen now. Deploying in Twenty... nineteen... eighteen...

And so on, she continues counting down over the following:

HILBERT
You both think that you're so clever, aren't you?

EIFFEL
Give it up, Hilbert. We can still stick you in the broom closet if you agree to go quietly.

HILBERT
Mmm, I think not.

We hear him OPENING A PANEL.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Just remember - you made me do this.

We RIPS something out of a computer. There is HORRIBLE ELECTRICAL CRACKLING SOUND.

HERA STUTTERS AND STOPS, dead in her tracks. This is not good. The station SHUDDERS as various ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS GO HAYWIRE.

After a moment -

EIFFEL
... Hera?

BEAT. Then -

HERA
Critical system crash detected. Restarting central processor.

Only she sounds... weird. Robotic and stilted and... well, she sounds a lot like the "Error" message from Episode 8.

EIFFEL
Hera, are you all right?

HILBERT
Don't bother, it's not her.

EIFFEL
WHAT?

HILBERT
I just pulled out the part of the mainframe that contained her personality programming. All of her automated functions are transferring back to the ship's processors, but the intelligence unit is gone.

EIFFEL
No, that's - you're lying. Hera? Hera, talk to me.

HERA
Error. No onboard personality operating program detected. Reverting back to manual station control.

EIFFEL
What the hell did you do to her?!

HILBERT
(typing something into a console)
Save your breath, Eiffel, you're going to need it in a moment.

A LOUD ALARM BLARES THROUGHOUT THE STATION.

HERA
Warning. Station-wide oxygen drain initiated. Warning. Station-wide oxygen drain initiated.

Once again, we hear the sound of AIR BEING SUCKED OUT OF THE STATION IN MASSIVE QUANTITIES

HILBERT
By now the reserves in your oxygen mask must be running quite low. You know, Officer Eiffel, at first I was a little disappointed that our time together was going to be cut short. You have done **a lot** to alleviate those feelings.

EIFFEL
Go to hell.

HILBERT
I'm afraid that...

But he trails off as a new sound creeps into his periphery. The sound of ACID EATING THROUGH METAL. The door to the bridge, GROANS, then CREAKS, then BREAKS. Into the bridge steps -

MINKOWSKI
(low, deadly)
Pryce and Carter six fourteen: "When in doubt, whip it out - 'it' being hydrochloric acid." Never. Fails.

HILBERT
Ah. Hello, lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
Hello, hello, “Commander” Hilbert. I think that you and I have a few things to talk about.

HILBERT
I was afraid you would feel that way.

MINKOWSKI
Do you have anything to say to defend yourself?

HILBERT
Would it really make any difference at this point?

We hear a BLOW LAND. Then ANOTHER. Then ANOTHER.

MINKOWSKI
No. No, it would not.

She HITS A BUTTON. Another LOUD ALARM SOUNDS.

HERA
Oxygen drain canceled. Station climate controls returning to normal. Station climate controls returning to normal.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel? You there?

EIFFEL
Yeah. Yeah. You okay, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
No, Eiffel. My second in command just betrayed me and tried really, really hard to murder both us. I’m pretty damn far from “okay.”

EIFFEL
Okay. That’s fair. Is Hilbert...?

MINKOWSKI
Out cold. Meet me up here. There’s... a lot of cleaning up to do.

EIFFEL
Aye aye. Good to have you back Commander.

STOP RECORDING.

RESUME RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - LATER

A BURST OF STATIC. Then, slowly, the space music transmission fades in, playing softly. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Hera, can you hear me?

HERA
I am sorry, I cannot take requests right now. Please try again later.

EIFFEL
Can you hear me? Are you there?

A DOOR OPENS.

HERA
I am sorry, I cannot take requests right now. Please try again later.

MINKOWSKI
(coming in)
Give it a rest.

Eiffel turns away from the console and towards Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
It really isn't her. He wasn't lying. Not about that, at least.

EIFFEL
Commander...

MINKOWSKI
He tore out all her personality and intelligence hardware. He... lobotomized her, pretty much. That voice is just the ship's processor now. It can run the autopilot, regulate climate controls, maybe open doors but... Hera isn't in there.

EIFFEL
Can we fix her?

MINKOWSKI
I... I don't know, Doug. It looks like he messed up the circuitry pretty badly when he tore them out, and this stuff is a bit beyond me anyway.

EIFFEL
But -

MINKOWSKI
We'll **try**. We'll try, I just... I can't promise you that we'll get it right. I can't promise you that we can get to a place where it's Hera, exactly. But I promise you we'll try.

A BEAT as they take this in.

EIFFEL
You got him trussed up somewhere?

MINKOWSKI
Handcuffed, bound, gagged, and the broom closet door's got every lock I could find on the station hanging off of it. I'm tempted to just weld the door shut.

EIFFEL
You sure that'll be enough to hold him?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I'm not sure of **anything** right now.
(beat)
Would you turn this crap off? I don't want to hear this music ever again.

Eiffel HITS a SWITCH and the MUSIC GOES OFF.

EIFFEL
Just think... three hours ago that was just music. Now...

He's not sure how to finish that sentence. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander, they knew. Like, when Hilbert thought he was talking to Command, the things that he said... They **knew** that we might run into something out here. And they had given him orders to kill us. This wasn't just Hilbert going crazy. There's something bigger going on here.

Minkowski has no idea how to respond to that. For a long beat they just sit, together in their shell shock. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
All I wanted was a nice Christmas dinner.

A BEAT as Eiffel takes that in. Right, it's Christmas. Then -

EIFFEL
It's my birthday. I'm 32 today.

The words hang in the air. Eiffel and Minkowski float together, unable to process the collective crash of the last few hours. And then -

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK. The "incoming message" sound.

HERA
Attention: incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

EIFFEL
Oh. Right. Hilbert never got his call back. I guess that would be Canaveral.

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK.

HERA
Attention: incoming pulse-beacon hail. Would you like to open communications?

EIFFEL
What do you think?

MINKOWSKI
Open communications. Run incoming messages through the loudspeakers.

A BURST OF STATIC rings through the room. Then a few COMPUTER BEEPS as the digital communication channel opens. And, finally, a sound not unlike the “ringing” tone on a TELEPHONE LINE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
I think it’s time that the two of us got some answers.

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP...

And then...

SILENCE.

ZACH VALENTI
Wolf 359 will return on February 14th.

END OF EPISODE 12.

WOLF 359

"THE KUMBAYA APPROACH"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

(<u>NOTE: THERE'S NO INTRO MUSIC OR "WELCOME TO WOLF 359" ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THIS EPISODE</u>)

A few moments of silence. Followed by -

A DOOR IS UNLOCKED and OPENED. A LIGHT SWITCH gets FLICKED, and we hear FLUORESCENTS HUM to life. The DOOR is SHUT.

We hear FOOTSTEPS. They increase in volume gradually, as if whoever is making the sound is walking towards us.

It may take a moment to register that this is the first time that we've heard footsteps on the show. And the implication therein that we are somewhere with **gravity.** Which means that we're not on board the Hephaestus. We're actually in -

INT. MR. CUTTTER'S OFFICE - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 0600 HOURS

Whoever is in this room has reached his desk. We hear him DROP SOME FILES onto the table space. He PULLS OUT HIS CHAIR and TAKES A SEAT.

We hear him TYPE something into a KEYBOARD, followed by one, two, three MOUSECLICKS. On the third one, a speaker begins PLAYING the overture to THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALGIERS, by Rossini.

The sound quality is PRISTINE. This is NOT a beat up space transmission.

We hear KNUCKLES CRACKING, a THROAT BEING CLEARED, then -

MR. CUTTER
All right. Let's begin.

He's a study in affability and modesty. It sounds like he hasn't raised his voice in years.

We hear a CLICK as he turns on a recorder program. He speaks into his computer's MICROPHONE.

MR. CUTTER
Memorandum to Goddard Futuristics Department Heads. Happy Boxing Day, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back, hope you all enjoyed your holiday.

Now, we have a lot to get done before the end of the week, so let's just jump to it, shall we?

We hear him OPENING the FILE. PAGE FLIPS punctuate the following:

MR. CUTTER
David, all your paperwork looks solid, you are approved for launch on Thursday. Keep me posted - I want progress reports on my desk every five hours for the rest of the week and hourly the day of.

Saul, the logs from the Hermes crew are getting a little concerning, but the psych parameters are all still in the green, more or less. Let's renew them for, say, 125 days and we'll keep our fingers crossed.

Rachel, I'm still waiting for those radiation readings from the Sigma sector. I know we've been having some trouble with our sat uplink, but we have a very sensitive timetable here. If those aren't on my desk by EOD, I'll have you thrown off the top of the building. And I'll make sure you go past my window so I can enjoy the view.

That last line is as breezy and cheery as everything else. Was that a joke? Or...?

MR. CUTTER
Also, when's the last time that anyone heard from -

He's cut off by an ALARMING BUZZING from a phone on his desk. The MUSIC STOPS.

MR. CUTTER
One moment, please.

He STOPS the recorder. PICKS UP the phone.

MR. CUTTER
Cutter speaking, and this better be an emergency of exponential proportions or I'm going to be really cross that you've used this line.
(pause)
Oh.

(pause)
Okay.
(pause)
Yes, open a pulse beacon hail and reroute it through my office. And close the line - no one hears this except me.

He HANGS UP. We hear various machinery WHIRR TO LIFE. A digital signal beeps and clicks, followed by the exact same TELEPHONE TONE that we heard at the end of Episode 13.

After two tones we hear a new noise, a sort of WHIZZING ELECTRICAL NOISE. It sounds like we're TRAVELING THROUGH THE SIGNAL, going a long, long way away.

After a moment, the sound abates. Only now we're -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

right where we were at the end of Episode 13.

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... Over the continuing BEEPS:

MINKOWSKI
Should this be taking so long? Has something gone wrong?

EIFFEL
This is a heck of a long distance call, Commander - give the operator a chance. Good things come to those who -

And finally a BRIGHT TONE as the CALL CONNECTS.

MR. CUTTER
(over the intercom)
Hello, Hephaestus! Guess who. Can you hear me? Am I coming through all right?

MINKOWSKI
Loud and clear, Canaveral. Would you like us to send verification codes?

MR. CUTTER
Oh never mind that nonsense, Renée. What an unexpected pleasure to hear your voice.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Mr. Cutter. Sir. It's been too long.

MR. CUTTER
That it has. Heck of a surprise getting a call from you folks. Happy Holidays.

If Mr. Cutter is surprised to be talking to someone other than Hilbert he is concealing it impeccably.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, sir.

MR. CUTTER
How were the celebrations?

MINKOWSKI
Eventful.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, that sounds dramatic. What's wrong?

MINKOWSKI
Wrong?

MR. CUTTER
Alexander wouldn't have told you about the back-up Pulse Beacon Relay that we put on your station unless you'd run into something really serious, so let's not be coy here. What's wrong?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
We're run into a situation. And it's... raised some questions about this mission.

MR. CUTTER
I'm all ears.

MINKOWSKI
(deep breath)
At 1600 hours last night, we recei-

EIFFEL
Ah-ah-ah, Commander, hang on a second.

MR. CUTTER
Is that Doug? Hey Doug!

EIFFEL
... Hi, Mr. Cutter.

MR. CUTTER
Renée, you should have told me that Doug was there! I might have slipped and said something about those secret orders he's not supposed to know about.

Eiffel and Minkowski look at each other. What is he-

MR. CUTTER
Just kidding. Sorry, bad joke. I haven't had my coffee yet, still half asleep, don't even listen to me.

EIFFEL
Right... Umm, anyway, I'm sorry to interrupt Commander, but before you go through the... stuff, I need to confer with you for a moment about the *thing*? You know... The *important* thing? That's on *fire*?

MINKOWSKI
Could you excuse us for a moment, sir?

MR. CUTTER
Oh by all means. Don't let me keep you from a fire.

EIFFEL
Her- Hephaestus, could you put the open communications channel on hold?

BEEP.

HERA
Communication on hold.

MINKOWSKI
WHAT?

EIFFEL
You can't tell him about the transmission. You can't tell him

about anything.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we don't have time for this.

EIFFEL
No, no -

MINKOWSKI
Things on this station haven't been making sense for months now, and I am sick and tired of not knowing what the hell we're doing.

EIFFEL
Commander, I know that by now you're probably used to just tuning out everything I say, but this time it's **important** so I need you to **listen** to me.

He pauses, waiting for a rebuttal. When it doesn't come -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hilbert. Hilbert got the smallest whiff that we'd made some kind of contact with alien life and that was all he needed to get his Ernst Blofeld on. You got space marooned, I almost got a one-way ticket to the operating table, and, oh yeah, jury's still out on whether Hera's gonna live to autopilot another day. And I don't care what his IQ is, he wasn't making that stuff up on the go. That was him having a plan. That was him under orders.

MINKOWSKI
You don't know that.

EIFFEL
Yes, I **do**. Hilbert's eccentric, not impulsive. So what's his boss gonna do when you tell him about our Close Encounters of the Third Kind? You think Mr. Cutter's gonna take the Kumbaya approach to all of this? Because my bet's he puts a team of Killer Commandos on the next space taxi headed to this neighborhood - and that's **if** he

doesn't have a remote that lets him blow up the station from his office.

He PAUSES, once again waiting for her refutation. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
Look, I don't like feeling like we're flying the U.S.S. Mystery Machine anymore than you do, but I like getting my head blown off even less, so I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say staying alive should be our first priority. As long as we're on this space station, we've got a gun pointed at our heads - and we need to start acting like it.

MINKOWSKI
And if you're wrong?

EIFFEL
Then I'm wrong. The universe collectively deals with its utter lack of surprise and we move on. But much as I hate to say it, Commander, this time I really don't think I'm wrong.

Minkowski lets out a low, weary SIGH.

MINKOWSKI
Reopen communications.

We hear a BEEP and a BURST of STATIC as the call is taken off hold.

MINKOWSKI
Apologies for the interruption, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Totally understandable. How is the fire?

MINKOWSKI
It's been... Resolved.

MR. CUTTER
Excellent. Now, I believe you were saying something about a... Situation?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir.

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH. And then she begins:

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
At 1600 hours last night, our scientific specialist and second in command, Dr. Hilbert, experienced what I can only classify as a psychotic break and attempted a mutiny. Both myself and Communications Officer Eiffel were targeted for assassination. We were able to restrain him before he was able to inflict any lasting harm on either one of us, but our station's mother program was heavily damaged and is offline.

Sir, we are now missing crew members that are vital to the mission, and while our automated systems are keeping the station stable for the time being, without Hera it won't be long before the station starts to go critical. Simply put, our situation is no longer tenable.
(steels herself)
As the Commanding Officer of this Mission, I believe that the Hephaestus Project has met with catastrophic failure. I am recommending immediate termination of the mission and requesting extraction for all remaining members of the crew.

There's a LONG SILENCE as her words ring out.

Finally -

MR. CUTTER
I see. That sounds like quite the Christmas party.

It's a flat, still reply. No anger, no shock, just a polite ice. After another moment -

MR. CUTTER
Renée, before we go any further, is there anything else that you

need to tell me?

Eiffel and Minkowski exchange a look. Crap? Does he know something already?

MINKOWSKI
N-no, sir.

MR. CUTTER
No, no, hang on a second, don't rush this. *Really* think about this before you answer. Make sure you're not forgetting any tiny details. Is there anything else you want to tell me? Anything at all?

Again, they exchange apprehensive glances. Is he bluffing? Do we abort the plan?

MR. CUTTER
What do you think, Doug? Can you think of anything? Anything that I need to know? Last chance...

And before they can even reply, he shifts gears again, and he's back to upbeat energy.

MR. CUTTER
And there it went. Right: your report and recommendation are acknowledged, Renée. Your request for mission termination is **denied.** The Hephaestus Project will continue as planned.

MINKOWKSI
But -

MR. CUTTER
Station parameters are all still in the green and conditions are within the acceptable range so we are going to -

MINKOWSKI
Sir, with all due respect, we **can't** keep doing this. We don't have the personnel, the equipment or -

MR. CUTTER
With all due respect, Renée, **you** don't get to tell **me** what we can

or can't do, and the next time you interrupt me I'm going to destroy you so completely that no one will so much as remember the name Renee Minkowski.

The more threatening his words get, the happier he sounds.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to hear that you are having difficulties with your crew, but I really don't know why you're bothering me with it. That's **your** problem. The entire reason you're up there is to keep things running like a well-oiled machine.

Now you... What? Want me to throw away the millions of dollars and years of work that have gone into this mission just because you couldn't do your job right? To send you home early just because you've messed up? Oh please.

No, you get to stay up there and make it all better. I'm sending you some information on how to transfer the station's life support functions to manual, you should be able to keep the station running through the end of the mission. I'm sure that between you and your new second-in-command - congratulations, Doug, I can't think of a better man for the job - you'll be able to figure it out. You will continue to work, you will attend all your responsibilities, and you will get me some results. Do we have an understanding?

MINKOWKSI
Yes, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Are you sure? You mentioned questions earlier, would you like to ask them?

MINKOWSKI
They've been answered, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Excellent. Well, in that case, it's been lovely to talk to my favorite station crew, but I should really -

EIFFEL
Ummm, sir? Permission to speak or whatever?

MR. CUTTER
Yes, please, Doug. You're among friends, what is it?

EIFFEL
I'm sorry if this is a stupid question, but, umm... What should we do with Hilbert?

For a moment that just hangs in the air. Then, Mr. Cutter BURSTS in LAUGHTER.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, Doug... Doug, Doug, that's not a stupid question. That's not a stupid question at all. You're going to shoot him.

EIFFEL
What?

MR. CUTTER
Crew member attempted a coup, endangering the lives of his superior officer and the completion of the mission... Sounds pretty clear cut, doesn't it, Renée?

MINKOWSKI
... Yes, sir.

EIFFEL
But is that... Legal?

MR. CUTTER
You're light years away from the nearest national border. The only real law that is applicable to you right now is the military chain of command, and that says shove him up against the bulkhead and terminate him with extreme prejudice at your nearest

convenience. Any other questions?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
No... I think that covers pretty much all of it.

MR. CUTTER
Well, in that case I should stop distracting you busy beavers from all the work you have to do. I imagine there will be some cleanup from that fire.

He almost HANGS UP, but then adds -

MR. CUTTER
Oh, and one more thing. Make sure that you both keep recording and transmitting your daily logs in a timely manner. I'm going to be paying very close attention to what you have to tell me.

All right, good luck! Keep up the great work!

Aaaand... CLICK. The line disconnects as the call is terminated. Eiffel and Minkowski stand in a bit of STUNNED SILENCE for a moment as the MACHINERY WINDS DOWN.

Finally -

EIFFEL
Huh. I guess someone <u>does</u> listen to our logs. You know, I'd always wondered about that.

Slowly, he begins to shake himself out of the stiffness of that conversation.

EIFFEL
I guess we're gonna have to start being careful about what we say to our dear journals. You don't think he knows, do you? Nah, he can't know. That's impossible. Can't be. No way. No how. Nope.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
He doesn't know.

(tick-tock)
Commander, I don't know if you can tell, but I could really use some reassurance right now so it would be really, really great if you would say something.

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry.

EIFFEL
Umm, I said reassuring, not -

MINKOWSKI
I heard you. It's just... I'm sorry. This is a mess.

EIFFEL
Hey, it's not your fault.

MINKOWSKI
It is. It's my job to keep my crew safe and... I mean look at us. Hilbert? Crazy. Hera? Broken. Me? I'd be dead if you hadn't found a way to let me back into the station.

EIFFEL
And I'd be dead from like a gazillion different things if you hadn't been around, so...

MINKOWSKI
I have no idea how we're going to get out of this.

EIFFEL
You'll figure something out.

MINKOWSKI
How do you know that?

EIFFEL
Because... Because c'mon, have you seen you?
(in his awful Minkowski impression)
"I'm Lieutenant Commander Minkowski, badass space pilot. I jump out of space stations into solar storms just to save my idiot communication officer's life, and I don't even mess up my hair while

I'm at it."

There's a moment of stunned silence following that. And then we hear another first for the show -

Minkowski LAUGHS.

It's a genuine, joyful sound, as all the frustrations and the rage and the fear that have dominated their life for the past two days just all come out as a big, long laugh.

MINKOWSKI
(regaining her composure)
Is - is that supposed to be me?

EIFFEL
Spot on.

MINKOWSKI
You're an idiot.

EIFFEL
Yeah, well... At lest I have you around to keep me out of trouble.

CLAK-CLAK-CLAK. We hear the "Incoming Transmissions" sound as machinery springs to life. Eiffel HITS a few buttons, and we hear a PRINT OUT being produced.

MINKOWSKI
What have we got?

EIFFEL
Memo from Cutter. Looks like a how-to for... Something involving the central processor?

MINKOWSKI
Gimme that.
(pause)
It's the instructions on how to switch the Hephaestus systems from A.I. to manual control. Come on, give me a hand with this.

EIFFEL
Wait, wait, I thought we were gonna try to get Hera fixed up.

MINKOWSKI
We are. And if we get her back online it'll be easy to switch these systems back to her. In the

meantime, though, we really should be making sure we don't run out of air or crash into anything. Here, start booting up this program on that terminal while I shut down the main processor. We'll have to do a full reset.

We hear both of them entering a few Commands at different consoles. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Are you going to do it?

MINKOWSKI
Do what?

EIFFEL
Are you gonna... Kill Hilbert?

That gives her pause. After a moment.

MINKOWSKI
No. I'm not.

EIFFEL
Okay. Okay. Sure. Whatever you say. Because, uh -

MINKOWSKI
I should. I'm not gonna lie: every scrap of my training is telling me that we really ought to just put a bullet in his head right now and be done with it. He's dangerous, and unpredictable... And smarter than both of us put together.

But... If we're not telling Command about that transmission from deep space, he's the only person that can tell us anything about what the hell is going on here. And I'm sick of flying blind. I'm not going to throw away our only source of information without at least *trying* to get something out of him.

EIFFEL
And what do we do if he doesn't feel like show and more specifically tell? Or if he's got another ace up his sleeve, like he

did with Hera's programming?

That hangs between them, unanswered. After a BEAT -

MINKOWSKI
Shutting down the central processor. Ready to switch over to the auxiliary power system?

EIFFEL
Yeah, hit me.

Minkowski HITS A SWITCH, and we hear various systems POWERING DOWN.

EIFFEL
Switching to aux...

We hear a BEEP as the ship's auxiliary power takes over.

EIFFEL
... right now. Inputting the transfer code...
(typing, typing)
And... Here we go.

He hits the ENTER KEY, and the system BUZZES. A non-verbal "Error" message.

EIFFEL
(typing again)
Umm... I said... Here we go?

BUZZ.

EIFFEL
Okay, what the hell?

MINKOWSKI
Wrong code?

EIFFEL
(checking paperwork)
No... That's right, but it's being overridden by something. It's almost like...

He types for a moment, then stops.

EIFFEL
Yeah, look, right there. It's not working because there's already something running on the auxiliary system.

MINKOWSKI
What? Why would something already be running on the aux power?

EIFFEL
Hephaestus Mystery number three hundred and forty. Is that... Is that a soundwave? Give me a sec, I might be able to get this to go through the speakers.

We hear him TINKERING with the controls, and after a moment he HITS A SWITCH. There's a BLAST OF FEEDBACK from the SPEAKERS -

Followed immediately by the GHOSTLY WHISPERING that we heard in Episode 6.

EIFFEL
Oh my God, this thing!

MINKOWSKI
What is this?

EIFFEL
It's those weird noises I kept hearing when Hera went offline a few months ago. I **knew** I wasn't crazy.

MINKOWSKI
What are they saying? Can you clean it up at all?

EIFFEL
Now that I know what it is, sure... I think I can even get it to go back to the start.

We hear him TYPING and TINKERING with the controls. After a moment there's a CRACKLE of STATIC. And then they hear it:

VOICE
(through speakers)
I don't know who you are. I know that you have no reason to believe anything that I'm about to say, and I know there's nothing I can do to prove to you that this isn't some kind of trick. But please believe me, for your own sake.

EIFFEL
What is -

MINKOWSKI
Shh. Hold on.

VOICE
My name is Captain Isabel Lovelace. I am the navigations specialist and commanding officer of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. 944 days ago, I arrived at this station with a crew of five men and women under my command. Supposedly, we were on a deep space survey mission. They told us that we were studying the star's unique radiation signatures, and looking for signs of extraterrestrial life.

Those were all lies. I don't know what Command sent us to this Godforsaken place for, but it has nothing to do with the red dwarf or aliens or any of it. I know that now, just like I know that... that Command never meant for us to make it back to Earth. They meant for all of us to die out here.

The Hephaestus Mission has met with complete failure and total loss of crew. Our communications officer and one of our scientists got sick. They got sick, and we couldn't help them. We called for help, but nobody came. Nobody even answered. It's been over a year since Command answered any of our calls.

So they died, and nine days ago, our astrophysicist just... vanished without a trace. Three hours ago Rhea, our operating system, suddenly went offline. So now it's just me and Doctor Selberg, we're the only ones left. They've been picking us off one by one. I guess they've decided that we've had enough time. Or maybe they just got bored with us.

And there's something else. There's something out here with us. Doctor Selberg thinks I'm

crazy, but I keep hearing things. Every night when I try to sleep I hear something moving around the station.

I'm leaving this message wired into the ship's auxiliary power system. I hope that no one ever, ever listens to this recording. I want to believe that they will not do this to anyone else, but if you're hearing my voice you need to know. You're not the first crew this ship has had. I don't know what they told you when they sent you up here, but they were lying. You're not the first crew of the Hephaestus.

We were here. I was here.

I don't have a lot of time. We've barricaded ourselves down in engineering while we try to restart our life support systems, but nothing seems to be working. Listen: your life could depend on this: you've been lied to, and you've been tricked, and you are in more danger than you could ever imagine. Don't listen to anything they tell you, don't trust anyone, and get out.

I don't know how you can do it, but for God's sake get out. Get out before it's too late for you too.

Good luck.

And then the message dies out, replaced by STATIC. Eiffel FLIPS a SWITCH and it CUTS OFF.

Beat. Then another beat. And another. They both take in what they just heard, equally petrified. And finally -

EIFFEL
You're not the first... That's all I heard last time. We're not the first...

He turns towards her.

EIFFEL
Commander... What the hell is going on here?

And with that, we FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 14.

WOLF 359

"WHAT'S UP, DOC?"

by

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1900 HOURS

EIFFEL
This is the log of Doug Eiffel, Communications Officer for the U.S.S. Hephaestus, coming to you from the station bridge. It is day 583 of our deep space mission.

And between you and me, friends, you couldn't have come at a better time. Our illustrious Commander has me running some tests on our station's central processor. Hopefully we can undo some of the Red Menace's damage to our autopilot. Of course that involves dotting all kinds of silicon i's. If you like circuit boards, well, you have struck the mother-

The DOOR OPENS and Minkowski enters, carrying a notebook.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, there you are.

EIFFEL
Hey Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Well, I just finished my sweep through the station. Counting the busted toilet in the aft deck, there's fifty-one different systems that have started developing glitches since Hera went offline.
(looks up)
Wait, are you not done with the tests on the processor?

EIFFEL
Umm, I kinda... Ran into something.

MINKOWSKI
"Something"? Is there a problem with the station computer?

EIFFEL
Problem? No, no, not a problem.

Definitely not. Nope.

MINKOWSKI
Then what is it?

EIFFEL
Well, it's a little hard to explain. I guess I'd call it more of a...

HERA
Pawn to E3.

EIFFEL
... Chess game.

MINKOWSKI
Chess?

EIFFEL
Yeah, turns out there's an old chess program floating around the processor's memory banks. Been going mano-a-mano with the computer for the past... Uh, while.

MINKOWSKI
And the to-do list that I gave you for today?

EIFFEL
... Is now right at the top of **tomorrow**'s to-do list.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you hate chess! You're always trying to squirm your way out of the weekly tournaments.

EIFFEL
I hate playing chess **with Hilbert.** I have this irrational need to win at least one out of every thousand matches.

MINKOWSKI
So have you won yet?

EIFFEL
I'm working on it, okay?

MINKOWSKI
How many games have you played?

EIFFEL
I don't have to answer that.

HERA
Please play your next move.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah, gimme a moment.

We hear him CLICKING A MOUSE. Minkowski walks over and PICKS UP his recorder.

MINKOWSKI
Are you making a log?

EIFFEL
Eh, go ahead and shut it off. I'll finish it up later.

We hear a CLICK as Minkowski turns off the recorder. She approaches Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
Now that we're off the record... Did you actually find anything?

EIFFEL
You mean, "Did you find any other secret messages about how everyone has been lying to us, nothing we do matters, and we're all going to die slow, agonizing deaths?" Nope. I've taken apart every inch of our computer system that can come apart without killing life support, and I haven't found zilch. If this Captain Lovelace person left any other easter eggs wired into the station, I can't find them. Any luck on your side?

MINKOWSKI
Mm-mm. I checked all of the station's personnel files and records, and there's no mention of Isabel Lovelace being on this station. Or serving in the Air Force. Whoever she was, they did a very thorough job of erasing the paper trail.

EIFFEL
If she was ever really even here to begin with...

MINKOWSKI
What do you mean?

EIFFEL
Spooky message telling us to be afraid and not trust anything? Bells *must* be ringing.

MINKOWSKI
What, you think *Command* put that there just to mess with our heads?

EIFFEL
New from the whack-jobs that brought you the Empty Man? I'm just saying...

MINKOWSKI
(shakes her head)
No... Lovelace, I've heard that name somewhere.

We hear her TAPPING a SCREEN.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I wonder if <u>he</u> knows anything about all this.

EIFFEL
Who?

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert. Tell me you've *at least* been glancing at the monitor every now and then.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah. He just sits there, staring out the window. Hasn't even said a word since Christmas Day. Are you sure it was a good idea to stick him in the observation deck? The broom closet's a classic for a reason.

MINKOWSKI
No vital equipment, no air ducts wider than three inches, only one way in and out of the room, and it's one of the doors that locks mechanically rather than electronically. And I set up some explosive charges on the outside of the windows, which I can blow

remotely if he tries anything funny.

EIFFEL
That sounds... Thorough.

This hangs in the air for a BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
All right, well, since we didn't find anything... I think it's time. I'm gonna go see if I can get him to talk to me.

EIFFEL
Whoa, you sure that's a good idea?

MINKOWSKI
I wanted to give him 48 hours in isolation. No food, no human contact. He must be nice and delirious by now. If we're lucky he'll be so desperate for food that I'll be able to bribe something out of him.

EIFFEL
And if he doesn't take the carrot?

MINKOWSKI
Then we'll have to go with the stick. Watch the monitors, don't get distracted by the chess game, and be ready to come help me if anything goes wrong.

EIFFEL
Wilco.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and SHUT as Minkowski leaves the room. Eiffel SIGHS WEARILY.

HERA
Please play your next move.

EIFFEL
You picked a fine time to go AWOL, Hera... We're so not ready for this...

The scenes FADES TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATORY DECK - MINUTES

LATER

A heavy CLANK as a door is unlocked. The HEAVY METAL DOOR that leads into the observatory deck swings outwards. Minkowski enters the room, looks around, finding -

HILBERT
Commander Minkowski. Nice of you to come by.

Hilbert's voice is thin and weak, hoarse from lack of use.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert.

HILBERT
Please, please... come closer.

MINKOWSKI
I'm fine right here. How are you finding the accommodations?

HILBERT
Perfectly satisfactory. Nice view. Quiet. No distractions.

He moves, and as he does he makes SOMETHING METALLIC CLINK.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Could do without these restraints.

MINKOWSKI
The last time you were without them you murdered one of our shipmates, so we're going to leave them on for the time being.

HILBERT
Did not murder anyone. Deleted program from a computer.

MINKOWSKI
Semantics, Doctor.

HILBERT
Tell me you're not mourning that appliance, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
She was a member of my crew.

That last note comes out a bit angrier and louder than she intended it to. It ECHOES briefly. After a BEAT -

HILBERT
And am I still a member of your worthy crew?

MINKOWSKI
That depends on what Cutter really sent us out here to do. And on how quickly you tell me what that is.

HILBERT
You know my orders. I have been running radiation experiments on biomass samples with the red dwarf's energy.

MINKOWSKI
For optimizing soap products and disinfectants.

HILBERT
Among other applications.

MINKOWSKI
Cut the crap. What have you really been doing for the last two years?

His only reply to that is SILENCE. After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
Fine, if that's how you want to play...

We hear MINKOWSKI retrieving something from her POCKET. Hilbert goes rigid. We hear a loud CRUNCH, followed by chewing.

HILBERT
... Is that...?

MINKOWSKI
A genuine, grown from the ground and plucked from a tree, Braeburn apple? Preserved in my personal cryo container for a special occasion? Oh yes.

We hear Hilbert's STOMACH GROWL. The man is starving.

MINKOWSKI
I *was* thinking of giving it to you. Fair trade for a secret or two. But every lie you tell me, every second you avoid answering my questions, pushes back the

moment you get to eat *anything*. How long do you think you can go on without food? Water? Sleep?

HILBERT
The real question is how long you and your pet monkey can survive without answers, in a station that's falling apart.

MINKOWSKI
A lot longer than you can, *suka*.

HILBERT
Temper, temper.

MINKOWSKI
I don't have a temper, I have an <u>airlock</u>. And unless you give me something right now I'm going to blow your traitorous ass out of this station. So, feeling talkative?

In response to this, Hilbert just LAUGHS.

HILBERT
Airlock, please.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
I will have the airlock.
(beat)
Well? I thought you were going to kill me.
(beat)
You should have put the apple away before you blustered into death threats.

You are not going to kill me. I am the only person that can tell you anything about the real reason we are here. The fact that I possess this knowledge is the only thing that is keeping me alive, and this knowledge of mine is the only thing that might save the two of you. So you can't kill me, and I can't tell you anything. It is a rather elegant stalemate, no?

MINKOWSKI
Stalemates.

She takes another HUGE BITE out of the apple.

MINKOWSKI
Those can be broken. And even you, Doctor Hilbert, you can be broken. I meant what I said about this being your last chance. To do this the clean way. Talk. Because I promise you that I can break you - and I will do it slowly. I may not be able to kill you, but you'd be surprised what you can live through.

Something about that gets to him. His expression darkens.

HILBERT
You brake *me*? Do not make the mistake of thinking you know me, Commander. You have no idea who I am, what I have done, what I have *endured*. Do not underestimate me.

MINKOWSKI
Well, you don't know me ei-

HILBERT
I know you are a waste.

That rings out like a slap to her face.

HILBERT
There's something about a peacetime army that attracts people who want to know what it is like to kill someone but do not have the nerve to find out. Cowards who need excuses, and pretense, and permissions. You are skill without ambition, loyalty without intelligence, discipline without focus. Your entire life has been orders going from those above you to those below you, and you in the middle... pretending to understand them.

How long did it take you to accept this post? A day? An hour? Finally a chance to be in charge of something, to matter! Well, you do

not. No one who matters ends up in a place like -

SLAM. The door into Hilbert's cell has SLAMMED BEHIND MINKOWSKI as she exits.

HILBERT
- A place like this one. Goodbye, Commander. Enjoy your apple.

And off that cheery note, we FADE OUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

A DOOR OPENS as Minkowski enters.

EIFFEL
Commander -

Minkowski lets out a FRUSTRATED YELL and SMASHES SOMETHING.

EIFFEL
(after a moment)
You okay?

MINKOWSKI
I'll be fine.

EIFFEL
Don't listen to Doctor Psycho-Drama there, he's just try-

MINKOWSKI
I said - I said I'll be fine, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Right. Well... I think that ended up veering into bad cop territory. Which, you know, time and a place, but this is clearly a job that calls for finesse. Let me have a crack at him.

MINKOWSKI
What makes you think you'll get anywhere?

EIFFEL
I'm better at improvising. Plus I've got the whole evil-scientist-guinea-pig-bond going for me.

MINKOWSKI
What are you going to say to him?

EIFFEL
Oh, I have a few ideas. And you're about to see how brilliant they are!

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATORY DECK - LATER

The DOOR OPENS as Eiffel enters the room. Hilbert looks at him weakly.

EIFFEL
Ehhh, what's up, Doc?
(no response)
Oh come on, that's a classic. Tell me you *at least* got Looney Tunes over at Mother Russia?
(nothing)
Maybe not? How about some Strangelove?
(his best Peter Sellers)
"Mein Fuhrer, I can -"

HILBERT
Tell Minkowski that this form of torture is cruel and unusual, but I am still not saying anything.

EIFFEL
Ahhh, so you *can* talk. C'mon, aren't you happy to see me?

HILBERT
Happy? To see *you*?

EIFFEL
Tsk, now you're just trying to hurt my feelings. Don't you remember all the good times?

HILBERT
What good times?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Okay, fair. That's a real shame, though. You know, we're very alike, you and me.

HILBERT
We are not.

EIFFEL
Yes, we are. I mean, you don't have my rugged good looks and winning personality, but, aside from that... Peas in a pod.

HILBERT
Name one thing we have in common.

EIFFEL
You're afraid.

HILBERT
Afraid?

EIFFEL
Terrified. Pretty much all the time. Minkowski doesn't see it, but it's a little harder to spot when you're fearless. Takes one to know one, I suppose.

HILBERT
You think I'm afraid of you and Minkowski?

EIFFEL
Oh God, no. You think we're both idiots. Nah, you're afraid of the folks back home. I don't know what they've got on you, but it's bad enough that you'll do whatever they tell you. Am I right?

No answer. Eiffel CHUCKLES to himself, just a bit.

HILBERT
What?

EIFFEL
Oh, it's just... Minkowski and I had a really interesting conversation with Mr. Cutter. Told him... Pretty much everything that's been going on around here. Your failed insurrection, that weird ass transmission from Dorado, even threw in a few mentions of our leafy friend in the air ducts. You know what he said? "It doesn't matter." He

couldn't even be bothered to know what we were talking about. Said he'd get a committee to look into it sometime in the next fiscal quarter. Don't you think that's weird?

So then I started thinking... What if I was wrong about Command? What if they have no idea if there's any alien life up here? And don't care? What if all the stuff they told you was just to see if you would do it? What if the only reason you think you're any more special than Minkowski and me... Is because they've been lying to you as much as they've been lying to us.

I mean... If I was in that situation, I'd be less concerned about keeping their secrets... And a lot more concerned about the armed idiots that are around you.

HILBERT
And what are *you* afraid of, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Me? Oh, I'm a man of many fears.

HILBERT
Without a doubt. Tell me, *friend*... Are you afraid that Minkowski will find out the truth about how you ended up here?

EIFFEL
What?

HILBERT
She does not know, correct? The material that was removed from your personnel file? What do you think she would do if she learned where Cutter found you? Do you think she would still respect you? Trust you?
(re: camera)
Is she listening right now? Should I just say how -

EIFFEL
No, don't.

It's quiet and small, but it's enough to stop Hilbert.

HILBERT
No. You see, Eiffel, unlike you, I am willing to confront my fears. We are nothing alike. Get out.

For a BEAT, Eiffel wavers. Then a DOOR OPENS and CLOSES.

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

A DOOR OPENS and Eiffel comes in.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
One moment, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, what was he talking about? If there is something that I need to know then -

EIFFEL
Look, right now it's really not important. I didn't murder anyone or anything like that, but right now I need you to just drop it.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

There's no hesitance or doubt in her reply. It's an immediate assertion of full confidence. So immediate, in fact, that Eiffel is taken aback for a moment.

EIFFEL
Okay? Oh, uh, okay. Well, in that case, I just got one of my brilliant ideas - I know how we can get to him.

MINKOWSKI
What's that?

Eiffel OPENS the DOOR.

EIFFEL
C'mon, we need to pick up some thing, I'll explain on the way.
(as they go)
Do you know where on the station I can get a hammer?

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATORY DECK - LATER

The DOOR into the observatory BURSTS OPEN, and Eiffel and Minkowski file into the room.

HILBERT
Both of you at once. Well, well...

MINKOWSKI
We've got you this time.

HILBERT
Do you now?

EIFFEL
You were right. I had it all backwards. We're not alike. You don't give a crap about the things we care about.

MINKOWSKI
There's only one thing that matters to you.

EIFFEL
You recognize this?

He holds something up to Hilbert.

HILBERT
(hesitant)
It's a hard drive...

EIFFEL
Not just any hard drive.

MINKOWSKI
That's the hard drive from *your* lab computer. All the data you've been collecting, all the logs for your experiments... Two years' work, all right here. Encrypted and password-protected, of course.

HILBERT
You expect me to give you the password?

EIFFEL
Not exactly.

There's a HORRIBLE SMASHING SOUND. Hilbert is BADLY STARTLED.

HILBERT
What are you doing?!

MINKOWSKI
Officer Eiffel just put a hammer through two year's worth scientific research. Do we have your attention?

HILBERT
Yes!

MINKOWSKI
Good. Now, fortunately, you keep very thorough backups, in five duplicate hard drives. Unfortunately...

We hear a ZIPPER and items being removed from a bag.

MINKOWSKI
... You once made the mistake of sharing that with me. So here we are, all five of your backups.

HILBERT
Please be... Very, very careful with those.

MINKOWSKI
I'm going to ask you questions. You are going to answer in a very direct, very simple fashion. Every time you don't...

EIFFEL
... it's hammer time for one of your hard drives.

MINKOWSKI
So: what have you been doing up here for all these months?

HILBERT
Commander, you must understand, I cannot possibly -

SMASH. Hilbert lets out a small WHIMPER. Unlike everything else they've tried, this IS getting to him.

EIFFEL
Two down, four to go.

HILBERT
What do you think Command is going to do when you tell them you destroyed vital scientific data?!

MINKOWSKI
I'll say it was unfortunately lost during your mutiny. So. Why send a geneticist into deep space? You've been running experiments with radiation, and microbes, and plants -

EIFFEL
And me!

MINKOWSKI
- And Eiffel! What have you been doing?

HILBERT
I - I - I - I told you at the start of the mission, I have been testing how radioactively charged microbes might be used to make more effective soap products and -

EIFFEL
Oh, that old cock-and-bull. Let's see if it's on the board. Looking for "Totally Made Up Crap Story" - Survey says...

SMASH.

EIFFEL
Oooh, sorry, that's a strike.

MINKOWSKI
The next time he refuses to answer smash two of the drives.

HILBERT
Please, Commander, you can't...

MINKOWSKI
Feel free to stop us anytime. What are you doing on my station?

There's a PAUSE. We hear Hilbert almost start to speak once, twice, thrice -

SMASH. SMASH.

MINKOWSKI
End of the line.

EIFFEL
Last chance to save all this juicy information.

HILBERT
Just do it.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
I'm not giving you anything, so go ahead. Destroy my work.

Eiffel and Minkowski glance at each other, hesitating.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Well? Where are all your threats?

Minkowski removes her GUN from her holster.

MINKOWSKI
Maybe I should just follow through on my *first* threat and shoot you right now.

EIFFEL
Umm, Commander, let's not get carried -

HILBERT
We've been over this. You cannot kill me anymore than I can give you your answers. There is nowhere you can point that gun that will make me talk.

But then something happens. Minkowski's gun moves AWAY from Hilbert, and instantly the energy in the room shifts.

MINKOWSKI
How about here?

EIFFEL
Commander...? Why are you pointing a gun at **me**? What are you doing?

MINKOWSKI
Improvising. Tell us what we want to know, or I will shoot Officer Eiffel dead where he stands.

There's a PAUSE as Minkowski and Hilbert look at each other. Eiffel's eyes dart nervously back and forth.

HILBERT
Why - you think I would care about that? I was going to kill all of you.

He's trying to sound nonchalant, but he's palpably tense.

MINKOWSKI
No. You were going to kill me, but you wanted Eiffel unconscious. I think that you're **very** invested in him staying alive for some reason.

She gives it a moment, and when Hilbert doesn't reply -

MINKOWSKI
Well, if it's all the same to you-

She COCKS her gun. Immediately -

HILBERT
NO!

MINKOWSKI
Well then... Looks like we've solved the puzzle.

HILBERT
Commander... You don't understand what you are doing.

EIFFEL
Umm, could we all maybe -

MINKOWSKI
You have exactly five seconds to make me understand or I will pull this trigger.
(beat)
Going once... Going twice...

The threat echoes for a BEAT. And then, finally -

HILBERT
Okay, okay! One question. Right here, right now. And you put the gun down this instant.

Eiffel and Minkowski both EXHALE, and we hear the sound of her GUN being HOLSTERED.

MINKOWSKI
Sorry about that, Eiffel. I had to make an abrupt decision there.

EIFFEL
(shell-shocked)
That's... All right, Commander. You gotta do what... You gotta do.

MINKOWSKI
(back to Hilbert)
Okay. Explain. What was your mission on this ship?

Hilbert SIGHS wearily. How to explain?

HILBERT
Wolf 359 has a very... unique energy signature, very different from the radiation found in other stars. I was sent here to study how these properties might be used to trigger mutations in various organisms, most important among them a retrovirus.

EIFFEL
Don't tell us that you've been trying to cure cancer.

HILBERT
Not exactly. It is a very delicate retrovirus. Manmade, codenamed Decima. Very expensive to sequence the genotype correctly.

MINKOWSKI
What does it do?

HILBERT
In its native state? Highly corrosive. Corrupts cellular activity, dissolves vital systems at an accelerated pace. But with the right mutations, it could actually help to restore damage,

reverse degradation on a cellular structures.

EIFFEL
It's a virus that can make you stronger?

HILBERT
As always, you horribly oversimplifying a complicated issue... but da. It can make you healthier. It can make you... More than you are. Theoretically.

EIFFEL
So why all of the big secrecy? Couldn't you just tell us that?

Hilbert PAUSES, uneasily.

HILBERT
... the Decima is a very unstable agent. It does not do well in experimental conditions. We have yet to find an effective way to manage it in isolation. It needs an active environment to remain viable for long-term experimentation.

MINKOWSKI
So you didn't want us to know that you were keeping samples of this dangerous virus in your laboratory?

HILBERT
No. I didn't want you to know that I was keeping samples of this dangerous virus in Officer Eiffel's bloodstream.

A horrified BEAT as that registers.

EIFFEL
What?

HILBERT
Relax, I have been keeping the virus dormant when I'm not running an active experimentation cycle. You'll be fine - as long as you have an experienced molecular biologist on hand to render the

virus inert. But yes, Commander, <u>that's</u> what I've been doing. I have been running mutation trials on a dangerous, experimental virus, and using our Communications Officer as an incubator.

A BEAT as this new information sinks in. Then -

HILBERT
All right, now that's done... Is that apple still on the menu?

And off of that -

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 15.

WOLF 359

"PAINFULLY EVER AFTER"

Written By

Gabriel Urbina

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1600 HOURS

We begin with a familiar sound:

EIFFEL
This is the log of...
Communications Officer Eiffel, on board the...
(yawn)
... U.S.S. 'phaestus Station.

Eiffel sounds like he hasn't slept for the past two days. He hasn't.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Coming to you from the bridge, this is orbit 597 of our day around Dwarf 359. Crap, I mean...

Before he can correct his mistake, a SHRILL ALARM BEGINS TO GO OFF. He GROANS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mother... Okay, terminating log.

We hear a tiny BURST of STATIC as he SWITCHES OFF his RECORDER. He presses a different button, and we hear the familiar COMMS BUZZER. Over the blaring alarm -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander?

Minkowski sounds as tired as Eiffel when she says -

MINKOWSKI
I'll be right there.

BUZZER. Eiffel turns towards the console, which is still going mental.

EIFFEL
C'mon you useless hunk of junk, what's gone wrong now? Hephaestus, systems check, please.

HERA
(still robotic)
Warning. Critical systems error.

EIFFEL
Yes, I got that part! Which system? What's gone kablewy?

HERA
Warning. Critical systems error.

Eiffel lets out a LOW GROWL of exasperation. The door to the bridge OPENS as an exhausted Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
What have we got this time?

EIFFEL
"Critical systems error." Warning system's being vague as ever, but the "check engine" light's on, so I'm gonna say it's bad news bears.

MINKOWSKI
Right. Begin manual systems check?

EIFFEL
Woo-hoo...

They both start typing at different consoles. It's clear they've been through this more than a few times.

MINKOWSKI
Life support?

EIFFEL
Negative, still in the green.

MINKOWSKI
Pressure?

EIFFEL
Negative.

MINKOWSKI
Navigation?

EIFFEL
Uhh... We're off optimal orbit by about three clicks, but it's not really life or death.

MINKOWSKI
Right.
(examining her own console)
Fuel... Nominal. Electrical... Normal. Temperature... Stable.

EIFFEL
What the hell else is there?

HERA
Warning. Crit -

EIFFEL
You're not helping!

MINKOWSKI
You're not helping!

A LOW RUMBLE comes up from BELOW DECKS.

EIFFEL
Well that's not a happy sound...

MINKOWSKI
(typing)
Hold on... Umm, engineering?

There's a BUZZ from her console.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
There we go. Looks like our number three engine's overheating.

EIFFEL
Oh, *great*...

MINKOWSKI
Cutting fuel intake for number three engine... Sealing off engineering, and preparing to vent section. Beginning heat transfer... Now.

She presses a button. After a moment the ALARM dies down.

HERA
All systems returned to nominal.

Eiffel and Minkowski EXHALE. They turn towards a CLOCK DISPLAY in the back of the room.

MINKOWSKI
How long was it this time?

EIFFEL
Twenty-nine minutes... Shortest gap between system failures yet.

MINKOWSKI
It's getting worse.

We hear Eiffel resetting the display.

EIFFEL
Life support's still having coughing fits, navigation's getting dizzy spells, and now one of the engine's having hot flashes. What happens next?

MINKOWSKI
Our power core explodes, or the central processor shorts out. We all die painfully ever after, the end.

EIFFEL
Commander, we can't keep this up.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, we can.

EIFFEL
No, Barack, we can't. **Hera** could do this, but she had a brain the size of a mack truck. When's the last time you got any sleep?

MINKOWSKI
If you've got another idea, I'm ready to hear it.

And there's pretty much nothing else to say on the subject.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
All right, c'mon. You said we were off course - let's see if we can calculate a way to get back on track.

EIFFEL
Commander, I haven't slept in 56 hours. You really don't want me doing math hopped up on seaweed brew. What else you got?

MINKOWSKI
Well... it's been ten hours. Someone needs to take Hilbert his rations.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Fine, I'll plot the course correction.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
It's *fine*, Commander. I'll do the stupid math to get us back on the stupid orbit. You can take Dr. Iscariot his gruel.

He waits for a BEAT for her to go. When she doesn't -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What?

MINKOWSKI
Doug, we don't have to talk about the Decima thing except as it affects what we do with Hilbert, but... we *do* have to deal with him. You have to face him again, sooner or later.

Eiffel WINCES a little. 'Decima' and 'Hilbert' are the two things he does not want to deal with.

EIFFEL
I know. I know. And I will. Soon. Just... Not right now.
(beat)
I just... I can't take a crazy Hilbert plot right this second, okay?

MINKOWSKI
All right. I'll be right back. Let me know if anything else goes wrong.

EIFFEL
Aye-aye.

We hear the Bridge door OPEN and CLOSE as Minkowski exits. And off the TICKING of the CLOCK. We -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - OBSERVATION DECK - MINUTES LATER

We hear the door to the Observation Deck OPEN as Minkowski enters, carrying a food packet.

HILBERT
Greetings, Commander. Was starting to worry you would forget about me.

Minkowski approaches him silently. After a BEAT -

MINKOWSKI
You're not an idiot.

HILBERT
And you have a lot to learn about flattery.

MINKOWSKI
There are limits. There's only so far you can push your body. Only so long you can go without sleep. Everyone has their limits. Even you.

HILBERT
What are you getting at?

MINKOWSKI
You would know that running a station the size of the Hephaestus is not something you would be able to do. Not by yourself.

HILBERT
And so?

MINKOWSKI
And so I don't care how desperate you were to get rid of me and Eiffel, you would never put yourself in a situation you couldn't get out of. You'd still need to have an AI system to keep the station running. Which means you wouldn't cause any damage to Hera... Unless you were pretty sure you'd be able to fix it.

There's a BEAT as this lands. Then Hilbert LAUGHS SOFTLY.

HILBERT
Shut the door... Let's talk.

And as the heavy metal hatch CLOSES we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - TWO HOURS LATER

EIFFEL
Are you insane?

MINKOWSKI
I just think it's worth considering. As an option.

EIFFEL
Oh, how silly of me. I really shouldn't be this close-minded about *giving Hilbert a surefire way to kill us*.

MINKOWSKI
Look, I know it's risky -

EIFFEL
There's the understatement of the year. It's not bad enough that our Hitchcock antagonist pumped me full of death virus, now you want to hand him the keys to the station? In which parallel universe does this not end with the two of us living out the rest of our short-ass lives as Decima chow?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Are you done?
(beat)
Okay, look: *you're* right. We can't keep running the station on manual. We need to get Hera back online, and Hilbert can do that.

EIFFEL
Screw him, let's get her back online ourselves! We've got the manuals and the system specs, we can figure it out.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, thrilled as I am to hear that you consider us capable of repairing one of the most complicated heuristic systems that mankind has ever assembled, what we need is a genius who considers computational engineering a relaxing hobby.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
And, as luck would have it, I happen to have one of those rotting away in my observation deck.

EIFFEL
And what exactly are you giving him in exchange for this house call?

MINKOWSKI
He's agreed to help us pro bono just this once. Turns out he has about as much faith in our abilities to not destroy the station as you do, and he'd sleep easier knowing there was a higher power to calibrate the engines.

EIFFEL
And if he can stick some code into that higher power's brain to make it his eager servant, all the better.

MINKOWSKI
It's not like that. The damage to Hera's personality core was in the circuitry, we just need him to patch up the hardware. He won't be going anywhere near her code.

EIFFEL
Chances are he doesn't need to! He's probably got Emergency Code Alpha Victor 2.0 already in the system.

MINKOWSKI
If that were the case, don't you think he would have used it last Christmas? Instead of ripping the AI core apart?

EIFFEL
That's Hilbert kool-aid talking.

MINKOWSKI
When did you get so paranoid?

EIFFEL
Around the time that you -

The SYSTEM FAILURE ALARM GOES OFF and continues over the following.

Both Eiffel and Minkowski let out ANNOYED GROANS as they move towards the consoles.

HERA
(still robotic)
Warning. Critical systems error.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
(to Minkowski)
Starting systems check?

MINKOWSKI
No, don't even bother - it's number three engine overheating again. Let's... Let's try seeing if we can vent the engineering section again.

EIFFEL
Roger.

MINKOWSKI
And pray this doesn't cause every pipe in the hydraulics system to burst.

They plug in some commands in their consoles. After a moment the ALARM STOPS.

HERA
All systems returned to nominal.

There's a silent BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I thought you'd be jumping up and down with joy at the possibility of getting Hera back.

EIFFEL
Of course I am. I'd do anything to help get her back online again. But... Not *him*. I'm not doing it if it means that he gets to stick his fingers in her brain and mess around with her mind again. She deserves better than that.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, she does. But Eiffel... I'm afraid that we don't have much of a choice.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
We need to do this before a critical piece of equipment breaks for good. So: I promise you, I will not let Hilbert hurt another member of this crew. He will only fix the circuitry that he damaged, and he will have my gun at his head for every second of that operation. And if he even attempts to do anything else I will shoot him dead where he stands. You have my word.

Eiffel lets out a LOW SIGH.

EIFFEL
Fine. Let's go before I come to my senses. But this time I get a gun too.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. I'll go get the doctor, you get our patient ready.

And as they move off in different directions, we

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - ONE HOUR LATER

We hear the sound or ARCING and MECHANICAL TINKERING as Hilbert works on Hera's mainframe.

MINKOWSKI
How much longer is this going to be?

HILBERT
What I am attempting is fairly analogous to cranial reconstruction surgery with very limited resources. Please... A little patience.

More ARCING from Hilbert's instruments for a BEAT. Then -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
And are the firearms really necessary?

EIFFEL
Yes.

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Such lack of trust...

EIFFEL
I'm sorry - but you're not the one who just found out he's being used as a Build-a-Virus Workshop. No, actually, you're the <u>opposite</u>

HILBERT
Tell me you are not still obsessing over your experimental exposure.

EIFFEL
It's - it's still nagging at the back of my mind, Dr. Hilbert, yes!

HILBERT
As I said, there is nothing to worry about. As long as I maintain its dormancy, you are at no active risk. You should be proud - the work that you are a part of could one day improve the lives of millions. Longer, better lives are within humanity's grasp, and the key to that may be in here.

EIFFEL
Don't touch me! Don't. You. Dare.

MINKOWSKI
Gentlemen, let's... take a deep breath. Hilbert, get back to work.

After a BEAT, we hear the sounds of Hilbert's "surgery" resume. Then -

EIFFEL
All right, *Gandhi*, since you're so concerned with the greater good, what's going on with those transmissions from El Dorado?

HILBERT
You know as much as I do. Command has been aware of the possibility of alien life for some time now. I was instructed of a few contingencies to be watchful for... And measures to be taken.

MINKOWSKI
These *contingencies* were enough for you to throw away all your research with the Decima virus?

HILBERT
Extraterrestrial intelligence has always been a... Pet project of Mr. Cutter's. And if there's one thing I have learned working at Goddard Futuristics it is that continued survival rests on never, ever keep information from Mr. Cutter.

Eiffel and Minkowski exchange troubled looks, but before they can continue this line of thought:

HILBERT (CONT'D)
There. Patched damaged circuits, rewired primary functions. Found workaround for every major bit of hardware damage, so the AI's personality matrix should be able to come back online. More or less.

EIFFEL
"Should"? "More or less"?

HILBERT
Damage fairly extensive, lots of pathways to reroute, subpar equipment. Might notice changes in mother program, but autopilot system should engage.

MINKOWSKI
What kind of changes?

HILBERT
... I'm curious about that myself.

EIFFEL
Oh, great.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, plug her in.

We hear as Hilbert slides in a piece of circuitry into the mainframe and shuts it. As the system FIRES UP -

EIFFEL
Hold onto your butts...

Machinery WHIRRS and SPINS to life. Various BEEPS and BOOPS go off as the AI core comes back online. Finally, after a long, rising string of computer noises -

SILENCE.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... Hera?

No reply.

MINKOWSKI
Hephaestus?

EIFFEL
Is anyone home?

The ship CREAKS slightly.

HILBERT
Hmm... Well, it's a very complicated system. It may take a moment for the mother program to respond.

Another SILENT, ANXIOUS BEAT.

EIFFEL
So does anyone have a game we-

And he's cut off by the distant, but unmistakable sound for an EXPLOSION. The ship SHAKES as the ALARM SYSTEM GOES MENTAL.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahh! Christ, what was that?!

MINKOWSKI
(already at a console)
Critical system failure in the... Engineering system.

EIFFEL
Why am I not surprised?!

A second TREMOR shakes through the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
Sensors report combustion in the engineering section. Number three engine on fire. Eiffel, begin engine fire checklist.

EIFFEL
Uh... Sure?

MINKOWSKI
Prime fire containment system, and get ready to shut off number three engine on my mark.

EIFFEL
Umm... Right. And that stuff would be...?

MINKOWSKI
Oh for the love of... Hilbert, I'm guessing you're still a fan of *not dying*?!

HILBERT
(very alarmed)
Correct, Commander!

MINKOWSKI
Then get on that console and be ready to do *exactly* what I tell you! Eiffel, keep your gun to his head and shoot him if he so much as twitches without my say-so!

EIFFEL
Sir, yes -

Another EXPLOSION below decks, and a new ALARM springs up. Furious typing punctuates the following exchange:

MINKOWSKI
Close number three thrust vent.

HILBERT
Closing number three thrust vent.

BUZZ. The console gives him an error message. No he's not.

MINKOWSKI
Close number three fuel line.

HILBERT
Closing number three fuel line.

BUZZ. Nope.

MINKOWSKI
Deploy liquid nitrogen reserves.

HILBERT
Deploying liquid nitro -

BUZZ. Not a chance.

MINKOWSKI
Why isn't anything working?!

HILBERT
(dawning on him)
Oh no...

EIFFEL
What?

After a second of FURIOUS TYPING.

HILBERT
There is problem. As soon as I plugged AI program back online central processor reset to default settings. All station controls got taken off manual setting.

EIFFEL
So *nobody*'s driving this thing?

A THIRD EXPLOSION. The station SHAKES VIOLENTLY. A THIRD KIND OF WARNING NOISE STARTS UP.

MINKOWSKI
Navigational alarm. The station's going into decaying orbit. We're -

EIFFEL
Don't say "falling into the star."

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, start shutting down the central processor, Eiffel, get the auxiliary power system ready.

EIFFEL
What good's that gonna do?!

MINKOWSKI
We might be able to use aux power to run the hydraulics system, put out the fire that way.

HERA
<u>OR</u>, you could all shut up for a second and let me think.

That rings out through the stunned silence.

EIFFEL
H-Hera? Is that you?

HERA
One moment, please. Unfamiliar neural conductor sequencer. Slightly reduced processing speed. New signal trace routing pattern...

There's a CHIME sound as Hera's start-up sequence finishes.

HERA (CONT'D)
Right, crew of the Hephaes - whoa, is that how I've always sounded?
(lower voice)
Hello.
(higher voice)
Hello.
(normal voice)
Hello. Anyway, lovely to see you. Sorry for the slight delay, new circuitry, still sorting out where everything goes.

MINKOWSKI
And we're delighted to hear your voice, Hera, but there is the tiny matter of our *exploding engine*?

HERA
Oh, I'm sorry, I hadn't noticed. No wait a minute, I can do that better. Upping sarcasm to 74%. *Oh, I'm sorry, Commander, I hadn't noticed.* Booting up fire containment system now.

MINKOWSKI
Well, it's definitely Hera...

HILBERT
I might be able to help by -

HERA
Step away from the console, Dr. Hilbert.

HILBERT
But I can divert the reserves in the -

HERA
Commander Minkowski, the less this man says the better this will go. Get him away from the console **NOW**.

On that last word, her voice drops to low tone. A CRACKLE of ELECTRICITY comes through the intercom.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, get away from the controls. Eiffel, shoot him if he says anything.

HERA
All right. Number three engine fuel line and thrust vent closed. Deploying fire containment system.

EIFFEL
Uhhh... Guys, we're getting kinda close to the star...

HERA
Fire is out, Commander. Confirm?

MINKOWSKI
(checks console)
Confirmed!

EIFFEL
No, guys, seriously, we're getting, really, really -

HERA
Yes, yes, yes, I see it. Engaging station propulsion system right n- err, right as soon as I find the pathway that lets me control number one and two engines. Uhh... Please hold?

For a TERRIFIED BEAT, they all wait -

EIFFEL
Hera?

MINKOWSKI
Now would be a good time.

EIFFEL
Hera? Hera? Heraheraheraher-

DING!

HERA
Got it! Engaging engines on a "get out of here" vector! Everyone hold onto something, this is going to - nnnh - get bumpy!

A LOUD RUMBLING SHAKES the station as two of its thruster engines kick into action. For a moment it sounds like the Hephaestus is going to come apart under the stress.

Until, finally, gradually, the rumbling dies down. A SILENT BEAT, followed by -

The P.A. CHIMES.

HERA (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, this is your autopilot. I am happy to report that we have now returned to our regular cruising altitude of stellar-synchronous orbit around Wolf 359. All systems are nominal. You may now unfasten your seat belts and move about the cabin.

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - ONE HOUR LATER

The door to the bridge opens and Minkowski enters the room.

MINKOWSKI
Well folks, you'll be happy to hear that Hilbert has been safely locked back in his cell - and, per your request, Hera, gagged until further notice.

HERA
That will no longer be necessary, Commander. I've been able to direct Eiffel to the directories containing Emergency Code Alpha Victor, and he's deleted it.

EIFFEL
(yawning)
But if you want to leave the gag on for a few days just for kicks, you'll get no objection from us.

MINKOWSKI
Go to bed, Eiffel. I'll take the first rotation.

EIFFEL
Nah, nah, I'm fine. How's the engine?

MINKOWSKI
The late engine, you mean. It had pretty much burnt to a crisp by the time the fire went out.

HERA
Fortunately our other three engines are fully functional, so we should be able to manage.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... I've been meaning to ask you: is there anything that you've seen Dr. Hilbert do that he forbid you to tell me about?

HERA
Well, Commander, I wouldn't be able to say, not without a direct-

MINKOWSKI
I am giving you a direct order to override any secrecy protocols implemented by Dr. Hilbert.

Hera's hard drives HUMS for a second. Then -

HERA
Right. Wow, that's a relief. Umm, okay, you're gonna want to get something to write with.

MINKOWSKI
I have a good memory.

HERA
No, **seriously**, you're gonna want a notebook. Maybe two.

MINKOWSKI
... Okay. I'll be right back.

We hear the DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as she leaves.

EIFFEL
(soo sleepy)
It's good to have you back, Hera. I missed... you...

HERA
Go to bed, Officer Eiffel. You haven't slept in three days.

EIFFEL
(fading)
What? No, no, I... want to hang out with you and... Talk... Just for... Just for a little while...

HERA
All right. Just for a little while. What do you want to talk about?

And as Eiffel starts to SNORE, we -

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 16

WOLF 359

"BACH TO THE FUTURE"

Written By

Gabriel Urbina

(WRITERS NOTE: THE FOLLOWING TAKES PLACE ON DAY 607 OF THE HEPHAESTUS MISSION)

START EPISODE 17

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1732 HOURS

We hear the CHIME of the P.A. System:

HERA
Attention crew of the U.S.S. Hephaestus. The maintenance department would like to thank you for your patience as we normalize the various system anomalies that developed during our absence. Please watch your step as you move throughout the station, as we are still likely to experience bouts of turbulence, hot water shortages, or localized explosions for the next few days. If you find that your immediate surroundings experience a sudden drop in temperature, pressure, or oxygen, please scream for your life at your nearest convenience and we'll do everything we can to address your concern within the next business day.

The PA CHIMES again.

There's a pause. Then another CHIME.

EIFFEL
(over PA system)
Unless, of course, you are currently confined to the observation deck. In that case, please address any and all complaints by putting them in writing, going to a corner, and having a good long think about all the awful things you've done. Thank you!

And one final CHIME as the PA channel closes. We begin to hear the sound of TYPING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Not that I didn't enjoy that, Hera, but we're not *actually* in danger of losing our air supply anytime soon, right?

HERA
Probably not. The life support system was among the least affected by the last few weeks, so you shouldn't have problems with that.
(beat)
Although I still haven't found where I left the airlock override code, so I *guess* there's a chance of an accidental air vent.

EIFFEL
How big of a chance?

HERA
Mmm, barring a major technical failure, I'd place the probability of that in the twelfth percentile.

EIFFEL
Let's try that one more time: What are the odds of that happening, specifically in terms that I can understand?

HERA
Well, based on the available data, I'd say the most viable answer is... Zibbeldy-Dibbeldy.

EIFFEL
Okay. Good chat.
(back to his controls)
Let's try Channel 145, okay?

HERA
Ready when you are.

He punches in a command, and we hear a BURST OF STATIC over the speakers. He FLIPS a SWITCH and kills it.

EIFFEL
Channel 145, no contact. Let's try 146?

Some TYPING, followed by ANOTHER BURST OF STATIC. SWITCH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
146, no contact.

HERA
What a shocking twist.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I know. I'm starting to feel like -

He catches himself halfway into the next word.

HERA
What was that?

EIFFEL
Nothing.

HERA
Who are you feeling like?

EIFFEL
No one.

The door into the Comms Room OPENS, and in comes Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel - whoa, it's really hot in in this room.

EIFFEL
Oh, you noticed? Can't get anything past you.

MINKOWSKI
Right... Anything to report?

EIFFEL
Umm... Space is black? Stars are big? I hate my job?

MINKOWSKI
Ho-ho-ho. Seriously, anything going on?

EIFFEL
Oh, not really. Everything's pretty nominal up here.

MINKOWSKI
Oh.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Any problems? Things going horribly wrong? Either of you?

EIFFEL
Umm... No, not really. Nothing I can think of. Yeah, no.

HERA
Uhh... Not at the moment, Commander. Everything's within acceptable parameters.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Oh.

LOOONG. BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
But is there anything that isn't an emergency *yet*, but is on the way towards-

EIFFEL
Commander, this is just a crazy stab in the dark, but... Are you really bored back there?

Minkowski SIGHS.

MINKOWSKI
Well... Yes. I mean, don't get me wrong, Hera, I'm thrilled that you're back, but now that I don't have to be babysitting the station's processor every half hour and Hilbert's not running experiments, there's not an awful lot to administrate.

EIFFEL
Well, now you know how -

He stops short again.

HERA
Yes?

EIFFEL
Nothing.

MINKOWSKI
You all right?

EIFFEL
<u>Fine</u>.

MINKOWSKI
Okay... Anyway, you *must* be up to something in between the bouts of complaining. Anything going on with our radio?

EIFFEL
Ehh, I'm just running a routine maintenance check on the receiver.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, call me a paranoid old harpy -
(Eiffel draws breath)
Don't even dream about it - but the last time you did a routine maintenance check was... Well, recorded history doesn't stretch that far back. What are you two really up to?

EIFFEL
Mmm, you know me too well. We're trying to see if we can learn a bit more about our mysterious space transmissions.

As he speaks he tinkers with his equipment, and we hear the familiar RADIO TUNING NOISES of his array. Amidst the tuning we catch a few notes of PIANO.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We've had a weak signal bouncing around our dish for the past four hours. If we could get a lock on it, we might be able to get a more precise origin point for these broadcasts.

HERA
But we keep losing the transmission after a few seconds.

EIFFEL
There's the rub. It's just like - like looking for a... transmission in... deep space.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, what is wrong with you?

EIFFEL
(gritted teeth)
I'm <u>fine</u>.

HERA
Officer Eiffel and I have a little bet going.

MINKOWSKI
Oh?

EIFFEL
(don't tell her)
Hera...

HERA
I've bet him that he can't go a full hour without making pop culture references.

MINKOWSKI
What? Hera, you're going to give him an aneurysm.

EIFFEL
Hey.

MINKOWSKI
Seriously - if this breaks him you have to buy me a new Communications Officer.

EIFFEL
Hey!

MINKOWSKI
How much time is left?

HERA
Twenty-three minutes. Time's up at 1800 hours by the central processor's reckoning.

MINKOWSKI
And what happens when he loses?

EIFFEL
<u>HEY</u>!

HERA
He has to completely abide by military protocol for 24 hours.

MINKOWSKI
I see.

EIFFEL
Aren't you gonna ask what happens if I win?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I can't really think of any scenario in which that would be relevant...

EIFFEL
Oh fine. Yuck it up...

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry, Eiffel but...this isn't completely unlike shooting fish in a barrel. Is that why you've turned the Comms Room into a sauna? Are you trying to sweat out the gibberish?

EIFFEL
Actually, that wasn't me.

HERA
I was, uhh, trying to fix an electrical surge in the aft deck system and I... May have accidentally overclocked the heating system for the Comms Room.

EIFFEL
And...?

HERA
And... I may or may not be... 100% sure of where in my control matrix the climate control settings are.

EIFFEL
So on top of the usually elevated levels of fun that are associated with scanning outer space for traces of alien life, I get to do it while luxuriating in this - this really hot room.

MINKOWSKI
Ah-ha. Well, as scintillating as it would be to watch you squirm with elementary grade English, I've just had an idea. I'll be right back.

EIFFEL
Hey, wait - 645.

MINKOWSKI
Mmm? Oh! "Avoid lockouts. Keep at least one member of your crew inside your craft at all times."

EIFFEL
Dammit.

HERA
What was that?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel's been spot-testing me, Hera. He doesn't believe that I've memorized all of the survival tips in Pryce and Carter.

EIFFEL
It's not that I don't believe it, I'm just disgusted by it. I keep hoping to discover it's not true.

MINKOWSKI
Well, believe as little as you want, doesn't change the fact that I do know them.
(as she goes)
And so should you!

We hear the door to the Comms Room OPEN and CLOSE.

EIFFEL
Completely insane... All right, where were we?

HERA
147.

EIFFEL
(tinkering with controls)
Right. Channel 147...

CONTROLS. STATIC. SWITCH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No contact.
(types)
Channel 148...

HERA
Do you want a drumroll?

EIFFEL
Ha-ha. Channel 148...

CONTROLS. STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No cont-

And suddenly from the static emerges a clear MELODY. Bach.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh, strike my last, *yes* contact. Hera, begin back trace calculations before we -

And away it goes. The channel collapses back into static. Eiffel GROANS in frustration.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Never mind. I assume that wasn't enough to get a trajectory lock?

HERA
Nope. Not even close.

EIFFEL
Ugh, fine. Give me a second, let me see if I can get it back.

We hear him playing with the equipment, and the radio signal fluctuates wildly. After a few seconds -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So... How are you doing?

HERA
What do you mean?

EIFFEL
Nothing, just... Asking how you're doing.

HERA
I'm fine. Why wouldn't I be?

EIFFEL
Well, you were kind of... Shut down for a while there. And Hilbert said he had to reconstruct a lot of your motherboard when he was repairing your personality core. Is the new brain working out okay?

HERA
Oh, Officer Eiffel, I can always depend on you to find the mot juste for even the most sensitive and delicate of topics.
(beat)
It's weird. Everything's here... more or less. But it's... shifted around. Like someone went to your house and moved everything just a tiny bit. So little that you don't even notice anything's off until you try to find something. And then you can't find anything.
(beat)
I'll be fine. I'm getting the hang of it again. I'll... I just need a while.

EIFFEL
Well, if there's one thing we've got it's a nice, long while.

HERA
What about you? Commander Minkowski filled me in on everything that happened with Hilbert.

EIFFEL
Oh so you heard about my demotion from "Communications Officer" to "Experimental Meatbag"? It's doing wonders for my C.V.

HERA
It sounds like a lot happened while I was gone.

EIFFEL
You have no idea.

At that moment, the DOOR OPENS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, crew -

EIFFEL
946.

MINKOWSKI
"In a tight spot, remember: statistically most things afraid of the dark."

EIFFEL
You're making that up.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
It... Matches the edition of Pryce and Carter that I have in my databanks. Word for word...

EIFFEL
You're insane.

MINKOWSKI
I'm disciplined. Although I will admit they do get more... esoteric as you go higher up the list. In any case, if we're trying to unravel the mysteries of the universe, I thought we might do a bit of outsourcing.

EIFFEL
What? To whom?

BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh no....

MINKOWSKI
Good evening, Doctor.

HILBERT
(through intercom)
Nighttime is arbitrary in space.

MINKOWSKI
At the moment, so is your laundry. If you want to ever experience anything approximating personal hygiene again, you're going to earn your keep.

HILBERT
Indeed? May I ask how?

MINKOWSKI
You're going to help us make sense of these transmissions from the Dorado system.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I'm going to give you an obnoxious number of waveform readouts, and you're going to decipher as much of them as you can.

HILBERT
Why the sudden interest in radio astrology, Commander? Expecting company?

MINKOWSKI
Have I mentioned the limited time aspect of this offer?

HILBERT
Oh, *fine*. It will be more engaging than staring out this window. I'm going to need a console with access to all of the station's sensory equipment.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

HILBERT
And something with the processing powers to calculate stellar dimensions. One of the CX-20's from the bridge will do nicely.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

HILBERT
And the means to realize a full spectral analysis of the transmission's radiological emissions. Access to one of my laboratory's workstations will be optimal. Agreed?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, I'm terribly sorry, those were "I hear you" okays, not, "I have lost all my senses and am about to commit a fatal error" okays. I wouldn't give you an Etch-A-Sketch, Hilbert. You get print-outs of Eiffel's radio logs, one notepad, and a number 2 pencil. If you want to do calculations, Hera can pump them through the station's central processor.

BEAT.

HILBERT
If I'm going to get anywhere, I will *at least* need the star charts for this system and for the Dorado Constellation.

Minkowski glances at Eiffel: okay?

EIFFEL
(slowly shrugging)
I suppose that sounds pretty harmless...

MINKOWSKI
I'll be by in a moment with all the readouts, Doctor.

BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(typing)
All ready on it.

We hear the PRINTER come to life and begins CHURNING OUT PAGES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You know, Commander, there's gotta be better ways to curb your boredom than riling up some Hilbert intrigue.

MINKOWSKI
What would you suggest?

EIFFEL
Oh, I don't know. You must have *some* hobbies other than making trains run on time. Something to do with friends? Boyfriends?

MINKOWSKI
Of course I do, but, well, there aren't really a lot of opportunities for rock climbing or trail hiking in the immediate vicinity. And - not that it's any of your business - I don't have a boyfriend.

EIFFEL
Yeah, no, that was more of a -

MINKOWSKI
I have a husband.

That's followed by a STARTLED SILENCE.

EIFFEL
You have a... <u>What</u>?

MINKOWSKI
A husband.

BEAT.

HERA
I'm sorry - one more time?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you've read my personnel file! You *know* I'm married.

HERA
... I thought that was a really weird typo.

MINKOWSKI
Oh for- Never mind. Forget I said anything.

EIFFEL
You're <u>married</u>?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel. Five years next July.

HERA
What's he like then? Mr. Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Mr. *Koudelka*, as a matter of fact. And - again, not any of your business - he is a wonderful man.

HERA
What does he do?

MINKOWSKI
He's a foreign correspondent for the Globe. We met during a furlough I had in Paris.

EIFFEL
Well my stars! Isn't that nice! You'll always have P-

HERA
Ahem? What will they always have?

EIFFEL
... Particularly fond memories of each other.

HERA
Oh? Because it sounded like you were going to say -

EIFFEL
(gritted teeth)
But I didn't, so shut up! How do you people live like this?!

HERA
How did your husband take the news that you would be going on this mission? He was fine with it?

Minkowski hesitates for a moment.

MINKOWSKI
Fine... May be a strong word. He always knew that I was interested in space flight, it wasn't a complete surprise. I was applying to the NASA programs when we first met, but then I kept getting rejected every year and... When Goddard Futuristics offered me this job, well, it was a longer rotation than anything we'd discussed but... It was what I wanted to do.
(beat)
And he knew it.
(clears her throat)
Anyways, I should get these readouts to Doctor Hilbert.

She heads for the exit. OPENS the door. Stops.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I'm serious, you two. Look at me and hear my serious voice: My personal life is none of your business. The broom closet is still vacant, so don't let me catch you two sniggering about it.

HERA
No sir.

EIFFEL
Perish the thought.

MINKOWSKI
Good.

The DOOR SLAMS. Eiffel lets out an APPRECIATIVE WHISTLE.

HERA
In other news, I think that I've finally figured out how to get the climate controls going again.

EIFFEL
All right, let's give it a shot.

At once all of the lights in the Comms Room go out.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well... That certainly was a shot.

HERA
That... That might have actually been the interior lighting system.

EIFFEL
Might it really?

HERA
Let me see if I can fix that.

EIFFEL
Oh, take your time. There's not really anything too pressing for me to take care of -

BZZT, a sudden burst of STATIC from the loudspeakers, followed by the Bach composition.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... Unless *that* were to happen. Tell me you can get a lock on this without needing me to do anything with the controls.

HERA
Uhhh... I think so. Beginning back trace program now.

EIFFEL
That would be lovely.

There's a SILENT beat between them as Hera begins the calculations. The Bach music plays on. Finally -

HERA
You're not, you know.

EIFFEL
Not what?

HERA
I don't think you're just an experimental meatbag. For what it's worth.

EIFFEL
Well, thank you for the vote of non-meatbaginess. That's one, at least.

HERA
You're actually very good at your job. It takes a lot of work to get anywhere with these instruments. You just... sometimes, Officer Eiffel, you ought to take yourself as seriously as you're taking our bet. I mean, look at what you're doing! You might be on the verge of something historic.

EIFFEL
Thanks, Hera, but that and a dime.
(beat)
Nobody sent me up here to make history. Nobody back at Canaveral thought I'd ever get anywhere with this stuff, they just needed something to keep me occupied. This thing I do - this really complicated, really technical, really difficult thing that I do - it's just here to keep me from getting bored. It's a hobby they thought I'd like. My *job* is... Well, I guess my job is *dying*. Dying in a particularly interesting, observable way. And the only thing that even qualifies me for that is having a pulse.

Rant over. He EXHALES.

HERA
What does it matter what they think? They're not you. You can be more.

EIFFEL
What do you know about it? It's not exactly the same when you're an all-powerful, basically omniscient super intelligence.

BEAT.

HERA
Not all super intelligences are created equal, you know. Some braniac decided it'd be a good idea to put an element of randomization into our personality cores, something to make us all... unique. So the first six months of any AI's life, all we do is aptitude testing, behavioral trials, psych evals... You don't like being a test subject? You think that's what defines you? Well, when those test results come back, if they say you're friendly and agreeable and willing to roll over for every bozo in a lab coat, well, *then* you get a shiny gold star and a cushy job flying jet liners over the Atlantic. But if that's not how your numbers come up, if the test say you're flighty or mercurial or have poor impulse control then get ready for a nice, long life operating mine shafts, or trash compactors, or you can get sold off for scrap metal or - or -
(after a moment:)
Or end up in other places. Doing things not because you're <u>good</u> at them, but just because of what you <u>are</u>. Has it ever occurred to you that there might be jobs for which the only requirement is having no pulse?

That shuts him up. There is a long, silently contrite BEAT.

EIFFEL
I'm sorry. I... I never realized.

BEAT.

HERA
It's okay. As it turns out I actually quite like outer space. And you can't say it's not interesting.
(beat)
And I like this music.

EIFFEL
Uhh... Yeah, this is nice. What is this? Beethoven?

HERA
Bach. Orchestral Suite Number Three. In D Major.

EIFFEL
Mmm, Bach to the Future.
(shit)
I mean, uh -

HERA
I missed that. Did you say anything?

EIFFEL
Nothing at all. But yeah, this is really nice. Let's just enjoy this for a moment.

And at that moment that Bach COLLAPSES into STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, moment over. Anything you can do to get that transmission back, Hera?

HERA
Just a moment, refocusing frequency arrays...

All at once all the LIGHTS in the Comms Room come back on.

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
... yes, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Did you accidentally reconnect the lighting instead of making sure we didn't lose the signal?

HERA
I don't have to answer that.

The door OPENS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, Hilbert's drafted up some preliminary calculations to - everything okay?

EIFFEL
Tickety-boo, Commander. What's the weather report from the Kr- *from Hilbert*?

MINKOWSKI
Drink it in for yourselves.

She hits a button on the intercom. BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Doctor? Tell them.

HILBERT
I've run the sideral projections based on angles of entry and the approach vector as correlated by -

MINKOWSKI
The *express* version.

HILBERT
Eh, fine. Looking at the star chart for the Dorado constellation, there's only one star that's within the right range of astronomical distances: Gliese 163. About 46 light years away from our current position.

MINKOWSKI
But wait, it gets better.

HILBERT
Gliese 163 is a red dwarf star. It has almost identical spectral characteristics to Wolf 359, it's the same kind of star that we're orbiting around.

EIFFEL
Is that more in favor of camp aliens or more in favor of camp weird-ass natural phenomenon?

MINKOWSKI
It's camp "This isn't a coincidence." Command knew what they were doing when they sent us up here.

EIFFEL
Oh.

This hangs in the air for a moment. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
325?

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
Pryce and Carter 325. Go.

MINKOWSKI
Don't you think that we should -

EIFFEL
What? Get more afraid? Get more paranoid? I'm getting maxed out on how worried I can get about this crap. So somewhere on their side of the galaxy the aliens have their own version of the Hephaestus spinning around Giraffe 163 or whatever they call it. Don't really see how that leaves us off any better *or* any worse. So when you think up whatever clever thing you're going to do to get us out of here, I'm with you all that way. But until then... 325.

MINKOWSKI
"An error is not a disaster until you repeat it."

EIFFEL
856?

MINKOWSKI
"No situation is unsolvable if you have enough dynamite."

EIFFEL
184?

MINKOWSKI
"Used in moderation, fear is an extremely effective stimulant."

EIFFEL
Oh come on! 555?

Minkowski DRAWS BREATH - and STOPS SHORT.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh...

EIFFEL
Oh? Hello?

MINKOWSKI
Hold on a second, I know this.
(beat)
Dammit.

EIFFEL
Hey, lookit that! Looks like there may be hope for you yet.

MINKOWSKI
Quiet, Eiffel. Hera, what's D.S.S.P.P.M. 555?

HERA
"Good communication habits are key to continued subsistence. Be in touch with other crew members about shipboard activities. Interfacing about possible problems or dangers is the best way to anticipate and prevent them."

This hangs in the air for a second. Then -

EIFFEL
So you forget the one tip in the *entire manual* that's actually helpful?

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

HERA
(clears throat)
Umm, speaking of much anticipated events -

There's a loud DING that rings through the speakers. Eiffel breaths the most COLOSSAL SIGH OF RELIEF of his life.

EIFFEL
Oh thank Sweet Baby Jesus and all the other Christmas Critters, I thought 1800 hours would never get here. Worst sixty minutes ever.
(single breath)
Get ready for the Recap: our Space Odyssey's getting Bach to Bach Good Mornings, Vietnam from Alien Radio Free Europe, and our Nostromo's one photon torpedo away from losing its deflector shields. Our paranoid android's having ED-209 moments, G.I. Jane's beginning of a beautiful friendship ended in marriage to Clark Kent, Darth Frankenstein's having a timeout in the cooler, what we've got here is a failure to communicate, and if you think any of that's gonna change anytime soon, forget it, Jake! IT'S CHINATOWN!
(pant, pant)
Oh, that's a relief!

HERA
Feel better?

EIFFEL
Loads.

HERA
Proud of yourself?

EIFFEL
Oh, you have no idea. I didn't know I had that in me.

HERA
Yes. Well, just one teeny, tiny little problem.

EIFFEL
What's that?

HERA
This -
(DING!)
- is the sound of me finally figuring out how to turn on the air conditioning for the Comms Room.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
The sound 1800 hours makes -
(BUZZ!)
- is *that* one.

EIFFEL
... Oh.

HERA
So I'm afraid you only went fifty-nine minutes and... Twenty-nine seconds without making pop culture references.

EIFFEL
... Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, I am so terribly sorry, Eiffel. Close - very, very close - but no cigar. Definitely no cigar.

EIFFEL
... Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel? You okay?
(snaps her fingers twice)
Are you in there?

EIFFEL
... Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Honestly, Hera, I think you really did break him.

HILBERT
(still through comms)
If I could just interject for a moment - ?

MINKOWSKI
NO.

HERA
NO.

And as they hit the BUZZER to cut off the line, we

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 17.

WOLF 359

"HAPPY TO BE OF ASSISTANCE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(WRITER'S NOTE: the following takes place on day 619 of the Hephaestus Mission)

START EPISODE 18:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - CARGO BAY - 0200 HOURS

We fade in from our credit music to the sound of a LOUD, URGET ALARM. After a few seconds of blaring -

EIFFEL
Hera? Everything copacetic?

HERA
Uhhh... Yes?

EIFFEL
You sure? Because it's alarms-o'clock down here in the hangar bay, and last I checked we don't have an "everything's under control" alarm.

HERA
Oh, that's... Nothing.

EIFFEL
It doesn't sound nothing-y. It kinda sounds, "Oh God, oh God, we're all going to die"... -y.

HERA
Just a... Slight flux in the pressure of the docking bay.

EIFFEL
Can we make it go away, please?

HERA
Yes. One second.

As the ALARM KEEPS BLARING, we hear a HATCH OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. Sit rep?

EIFFEL
Apparently the hangar bay is getting the bends, but Rosie's cleaning up the mess.

HERA
Normalizing air pressure levels now...

There's an AUDIBLE WHOOSH as the air levels in the room adjust. But instead of stopping, the ALARM grows LOUDER.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

EIFFEL
Whatever's happening seems to be making the alarm *louder*.

HERA
There is no need to panic, the hangar bay is just a tiny bit over-pressurized. It's a completely routine anomaly. I'll just vent a bit of the excess air out of the room.

EIFFEL
And, umm, how do the red lights that just started flashing factor into that equation?

MINKOWSKI
What flashing - oh no.

HERA
Beginning air vent in -

MINKOWSKI
Wait, wait, abort! You're about to-

HERA
Commander, things will be <u>fine</u>. <u>Trust me</u>.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, get down! This room's about to -

We don't hear the rest of that line, as at that moment a KLAXON BLARES a deafening warning TONE, and suddenly everything goes CRAZY.

The LOUD GUST of WIND cuts through the room. Everything that isn't bolted down in the hangar bay is tossed around, going CLANG! and BANG! and BOOM! against the walls and other objects. For about thirty seconds, there's a HURRICANE in that room.

When things settle down, the SILENCE is DEAFENING. At the very least that took care of the alarms.

HERA
There! See? Problem solved.

There's no reply. After a moment -

HERA (CONT'D)
Commander? Officer Eiffel?

Nothing.

HERA (CONT'D)
In retrospect, that... *May* have been the main airlock that I just opened, not the auxiliary vent. Umm, sorry about that?

If there were crickets in space, we'd be hearing them.

HERA (CONT'D)
And... My senses aren't picking up your heat signatures anywhere inside the station, which would suggest...

She's getting a bit panicky at the echoing silence.

HERA (CONT'D)
Did... Did I just kill everyone? I think I just killed everyone. I didn't know it would be that easy. Why was it *that easy* to kill everyone?! I never thought *that's* how I would end up killing -

BZZT! There's a BURST of STATIC, and then through an intercom, we hear Minkowski COUGHING.

MINKOWSKI
(via intercom)
Hera, what the hell was that!?

HERA
Oh my God, Commander. Are you -

MINKOWSKI
We're fine! We're alive!

HERA
Where are you? You're not showing up in any of my systems.

As Minkowski answers, we transition into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET LAB - CONTINUOUS

MINKOWSKI
We had just enough time to dive into the closest room. We're in that hidden laboratory we found a few months ago, the one that's off the grid. That's why you can't see or hear us.

EIFFEL
(deep breaths)
Okay, I'll admit it... Installing that hatch over the hole in the wall *wasn't* a total waste of a Saturday afternoon.

MINKOWSKI
Fortunately, Eiffel had one of his portable comms transmitters on him. But we're both here, we're both fine. We haven't died.
(then)
Yet.

HERA
Commander, I am so sorry, I have no idea how -

MINKOWSKI
Just - just get the hangar bay repressurized. On the double.

HERA
Yes, sir. It should only take about... an hour.

MINKOWSKI
Get it done. We'll be in touch.

HERA
Happy to be of assistance, sir.

We hear a BURST of STATIC as Minkowski switches off the transmitter.

EIFFEL
Oh great, an hour in the station's creepiest corner...

MINKOWSKI
C'mon. Hilbert hooked up the old computer terminal to the power grid when we were clearing out this room. Let's see if we can connect to our central systems and give Hera a hand.

EIFFEL
Aye aye.

We hear them BOOTING UP the computer. After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
You think she's okay?

EIFFEL
What, Hera?

MINKOWSKI
It hasn't exactly been smooth sailing lately. She's been struggling with *a lot* of things around the station.

EIFFEL
Well, you know how it is when your mechanical brain gets broken and you have to get it replaced with a new one made mostly out of electrical tape and paperclips. Oh, wait, <u>no you don't.</u> <u>Neither</u> of us know what that's like at all.

MINKOWSKI
I'm... I'm not unsympathetic, Eiffel. But I'm also not unalarmed. I don't know if you noticed, but we just had a near catastrophe there.

EIFFEL
We all make mistakes. Give her some time.

The computer finishes BOOTING UP with a DING. Its HARD DRIVE SPINS.

MINKOWSKI
How much time? Because avoiding mistakes like *that* is pretty much the reason we have -

Minkowski STOPS SHORT as the screen flickers on. For a moment she just stares at the computer.

EIFFEL
Commander? You okay?

There's a long BEAT. Then Minkowski SWALLOWS HARD.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... You remember the first time we were in here? With the -

EIFFEL
With the spider, yes. It'll be a few lifetimes of the Earth before I forget that.

MINKOWSKI
And the log we found in this computer? About the experiments?

EIFFEL
Uh, vaguely? From Doctor Whoozis?

MINKOWSKI
No, not Doctor Whoozis - Doctor Selberg. Listen:
(reading off log)
"Contact with live specimens extremely dangerous, as shown with recent exposure trial. Captain Lovelace has ordered termination of all samples."

EIFFEL
Wait, Lovelace? As in our friend from the hidden S.O.S. message?

MINKOWSKI
That one. I told you I'd heard that name before... I think we may have just found a non-Hilbert source of information.

And off that -

FADE TO:

LATER -

EIFFEL
Okay, so there's bad news and there's good news.

The *bad* news is that this hard drive is shot to hell, and most of the files on it are corrupted.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
There's a few experimental logs I can access, but Dr. Selberg seems to have been a man with a one-track mind - and his track was eight-legged things that go bump in my nightmares. I'll mark those for you, and you can go through them once I'm far... **far...** away.

MINKOWSKI
And the good news?

EIFFEL
The good news, is there's six audio files floating around in backup directories. They probably bled over from another computer through an old server.

MINKOWSKI
And what's on those?

EIFFEL
Why don't we find out?

We hear him turning on a SET OF SPEAKERS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Blast from the past, volume one. Here we go.

We hear Eiffel TAPPING A FEW BUTTONS, followed by a CRACKLE OF STATIC. Over a somewhat distorted noise, we hear the recording. There's a P.A. chime, followed by:

LOVELACE
(through recording)
Hephaestus Station. Captain Isabel Lovelace here.

She speaks with a somber, grave tone.

EIFFEL
Hello, hello!

MINKOWSKI
Turn up the volume.

We hear a KNOB TURNING.

LOVELACE
It is with an... Extremely heavy heart that I report that our evasive maneuvers have **failed.**
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
In spite of our best efforts to avoid it, the alien mothership has spotted us, and is closing in on an intercept vector. If we are really lucky we'll avoid their death ray, but all hands should brace for immediate impact. In the extremely likely event of a boarding party, remember what we learned from our battle with their advance scout. They're vulnerable in the back of the false head and underneath their tentacles, but **be careful:** whatever you do, don't look into their third eye. Continue to work on the barricade, but don't forget to swing by the armory for some liquid courage and really big guns, all right?

Oh. And could somebody be a doll and get rid of that half-autopsied alien body in the medical bay? That would just be -

IN RECORDING: Lovelace is interrupted by the familiar BUZZER of the Comms System.

IN RECORDING: There's some unintelligible, ANGRY MUTTERING coming through the Comms System. Then -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
It's okay, Officer Lambert, just a little joke to pass the time. There's nothing to -

IN RECORDING: More, angrier muttering. Then -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay, okay, message received, <u>thank you</u>. Now go away. Go far away.

IN RECORDING: Lovelace hits a button, and hangs up.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Anyway... This is the log of Captain Isabel Lovelace, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Hephaestus. It is day 97 of our orbit around Wolf 359. We are not, I am happy to say, under attack by little green men.

(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
On an unrelated note, my personal mission to get Communications Officer Lambert to crack a smile is an ongoing project.

IN RECORDING: We hear her flipping through a few pages.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Morale amongst all the non-buzzkill members of the crew is fairly high. Dr. Selberg reports that his biomass samples are developing *ahead* of schedule, and Dr.'s Hui and Fourier are happy with the results of their first radiation trial. Petty Officer Fisher is still trying to figure out how to get rid of that interference in the navigation system, but he seems optimistic.

And Communications Officer Lambert is... Communications Officer Lambert. So an enormous stick in the mud.

IN RECORDING: There's a series of BEEPS from a CONSOLE.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I heard that, Rhea. You are expressly forbidden from telling him I said that.

IN RECORDING: Two more BEEPS.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
More on these stories, as they develop. Captain Lovelace out.

There's a CLICK from her RECORDER as the first RECORDING ENDS. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
Well...

EIFFEL
She sounds awesome.

MINKOWSKI
She sounds terrible.

They exchange looks.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh, well, agreeing to disagree for a moment...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is it me or does her crew seem a lot more... Robust than ours?

MINKOWSKI
Biologist, some sort of engineer from the sounds of it...

EIFFEL
What were the other two doctors? Astronomers?

MINKOWSKI
Or physicists, if they were doing radiation tests. And that device at the end sounded like a gen zero A.I. Unit.

EIFFEL
Sooo... How come Command sent Captain Picard up here with only half the crew they gave Kirk?

MINKOWSKI
Let's see if we can find out.

EIFFEL
Roger.
(tapping keys)
Volume two, coming right up...

We hear the sound of a RECORDER ENGAGE as the second recording begins.

LOVELACE
This is the log of Captain Isabel Lovelace, on day 383 of our mission around Wolf 359.

This time around she sounds exhausted.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Just had another argument with Officer Lambert. He wants me talk to Fourier and Hui, thinks they should hear it from *the captain*. Like we don't have enough on our hands with that meteor shower that's supposed to hit us tomorrow.
(she sighs)
Honestly, as long as they get their jobs done, I could care less about what they do during their down time. If they want to -

IN RECORDING: She's cut off as an ALARM GOES OFF.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Rhea, talk to me. What's going on?

At a drop of a hat, she's all steely business.

IN RECORDING: There's a series of BEEPS as Rhea pulls up information.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Goddammit, that's way ahead of projections. Get me an ETA on first impact. And patch me through to Fisher's helmet comms.

IN RECORDING: There's a CHIRP as the Comms Channel opens.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Officer Fisher, drop whatever you are doing and head for the nearest airlock, now.

IN RECORDING: There's a tiny bit of INDISTINCT CHATTER, which she cuts off -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
No, listen: I don't care about the panel. Hui's projections were *way* off, the meteors are inbound right the hell now.

IN RECORDING: There's a distant RUMBLING. Another second of CHATTER.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Mace, just shut up and do as you are told. You're about to be in the middle of an high velocity mine field. **Get inside right n-**

IN RECORDING: She's cut off as the METEORS IMPACT against the Hephaestus. SPARKS FLY, METAL RUMBLES AND BREAKS, and as the first EXPLOSION BREAKS OUT -

The recording CUTS OFF.

MINKOWSKI
Next one. Play the -

EIFFEL
(typing)
Already on it, just a sec...

The RECORDER ENGAGES as Volume Three starts playing. There's a loud BURST OF STATIC and DISTORTION at the start of this recording. As it dies down -

LOVELACE
-tain Lovelace, this is day 435 of the Hephaestus Mission.

Doctor Selberg took off the cast today. Looks like my arm's healing well, but he wants to keep taking regular X-Rays to be sure.

He... He helped me clean out Fisher's quarters this afternoon. He was right, of course. The longer I put it off, the worse it would've been. As it is, I don't know that I could have done it without him.
(clears her throat)
Fourier and Hui are moving ahead with their experiments. I wish they'd wait for some kind of response to the distress signal we sent out after the meteor shower, but... We only have another ten months up here, and we need to move faster to get results.

Lambert's the only one who's still treating this like a review. He's reacting to the whole mess in stride. Maybe that's smart. But I'd like to be able to dodge the next curveball, if it comes. When it comes. I just hope those two kids know what they're doing.

A BLIP as her recorder shuts up.

EIFFEL
Ten months?

MINKOWSKI
They were probably on a 730-day rotation - same as us.

EIFFEL
But in the other message, the one she left for us, didn't she say that it was, like -

MINKOWSKI
(glum)
Day 944. She'd been here for 944 days.

EIFFEL
So they just <u>left</u> them here? What's going to happen to us? Is Cutter just going to -

He's interrupted by the sound of the computer console POWERING DOWN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no!

He smacks the side of the computer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We're losing power. Terminal's shutting down.

MINKOWSKI
Damn it all...
(switches on transmitter)
Hera, what's going on with the power grid?

HERA
Just some... Teeny, tiny fluctuations in the flow of energy, nothing to be alarmed by.

MINKOWSKI
Well, we need full power back, ASAP. We might actually be on the verge of making sense of something for once.

HERA
Look, I'm *trying*, okay? And I'm also trying to get the pressure system back to normal, a task I am attempting to tackle with a minimum of trial and error for the sake of <u>your</u> health, so give me a bit of space, okay Officer Eiffel?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

There's an AWKWARD MOMENT as Hera realizes what just happened.

HERA
I mean -

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you <u>are</u> aware of who you're talking to, right?

HERA
Of course I am, <u>Commander</u>. I'm sorry, it's just... I'm not used to hearing your voice through the transmitter. That's all.

There's a HUM of electrical activity as a POWER SURGE hits the room. The computer TERMINAL boots back up.

HERA (CONT'D)
There. Is that better?

MINKOWSKI
... Much. Thank you, Hera.

HERA
You're welcome. I'm... I'm going to keep working on the airflow problem.

MINKOWSKI
Keep us posted.

Minkowski SWITCHES OFF the transmitter.

EIFFEL
I'm sure that was -

MINKOWSKI
Let's just finish up these logs before something else goes wrong with the computer. We can do an in-depth analysis of how boned we are after we've heard all of them.

EIFFEL
Okay, sure.
(typing)
Umm, the Lovelace chronicles, chapter four.

The fourth recording begins:

LOVELACE
This is the log of Captain Isabel Lovelace, on day -

She stops short, as if something had caught her attention. After a second -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Did you hear that? Did - There it is again. Did you hear it?

Honestly, we're not sure. Between the crackle of the recording and the ambient noise of the station, it's hard to say either way.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I've been hearing things for the past few weeks. Always late at night, when the others are asleep. Always when I'm alone. It's like there's something scurrying inside the walls. Like there's rats in the walls.

Dr. Selberg says he's worried about me. I'm not getting enough sleep. Well, nobody is. We're all pulling double shifts practically every day. We can sleep once we get off this station.

There's a BEAT. Then she continues - lower, angrier.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Does anybody even listen to these? We all keep making these logs, and sending them but... I've been asking for help for *months* now. Somebody should have contacted us, somebody should have *been here* by now. You people haven't told me something. Something important. Something about this -

She stops again. Then, urgently.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
There, in the walls. *Listen.*

She holds up the recorder to the walls.

Eiffel and Minkowski lean in, listening intently. After a moment -

EIFFEL
(whisper)
Are you hearing -

MINKOWSKI
Shh...

And finally, soft but definitely there, is the sound of FAINT SCRATCHING.

Then -

LOVELACE
Talk to me, Canaveral. Before bad things happen.

STATIC. End of the fourth recording.

That gives them PAUSE. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Was... Was there something there? In the walls?

MINKOWSKI
I'm not sure, Eiffel.
(beat)
Play the next one.

A bit of typing, and then a BURST OF STATIC. Start of the fifth recording.

IN RECORDING: Captain Lovelace lets out a LONG SIGH.

LOVELACE
Captain's log. Day 872.

Doctor Hui died today. Dr. Selberg was with him all night. He passed sometime in the early hours. Apparently... he did stop coughing at the end. Seems it was... relatively painless. As far these things go.

He gave us some letters. For his mother, his sisters. Dr. Fourier and I promised we'd deliver them if we get back to Earth.

Fourier thinks there must be something wrong with the Comms system. Some... Mechanical fault or interference we haven't noticed.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
She says it's the only explanation for why nobody's come to help us. I wish I could believe that too. But I don't think so. I think you just don't care anymore.
(beat)
I miss Lambert.
(she laughs a tiny, bitter laugh)
I never thought I'd say that. Out of everyone we've lost but... Yeah. I wish you were still here, Sam. I wish you were here to tell me not to call you that.

After a moment, she SWITCHES OFF the recorder.

MINKOWSKI
Okay... Last one.

EIFFEL
I kinda...is this getting kinda morbid? Maybe we shouldn't listen to this.

MINKOWSKI
You mean listen to how she died?

EIFFEL
Yeah...that thing.

MINKOWSKI
If there's something on the log that can help us, then I want to know what it is. And if that's the case, I don't think she'd mind.

HERA
I agree.

EIFFEL
Hera? How are you listening in?

MINKOWSKI
And what's the status of the air supply?

HERA
We're close, Commander. And playing the audio files is integrating them with my servers. Please, Officer Eiffel. We should finish this.

EIFFEL
Okay. Take it away, Isabel...

We hear Eiffel TYPING. The final recording BEGINS:

LOVELACE
Captain's Log. U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Final entry.

Her voice is 100% proof venom as she says -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Run and hide.

That's all I have to say to you.

Run. And. Hide.

Because I'm coming for all you bastards. You probably thought you'd never see me again. You thought if you just left us up here you could forget all about us. Out of sight, out of mind, huh?

Jokes on you. You bastards killed most of my crew, but *I'm* still alive, and *Dr. Selberg* is still alive, and we have a way to get off this tin can. It's taken months, but we found a way. It's not gonna be pretty. It's not gonna be fast. But we'll make it back to Earth, and the first thing we're going to do as soon as we get home is find everyone involved in this sadistic little field-trip and make you pay.

So if you're listening to this:

Run. And. Hide.

Because by the time that I'm done you will feel more helpless and more alone than all the innocent people you've ever hurt.

See you soon.

The message has barely collapsed into STATIC before we hear-

EIFFEL
WHOOO!

MINKOWSKI
Calm down, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
No! No calming down! I encourage you to join me in the fist-pumping section of the audience! For those about to kick Goddard Futuristics butt, we salute you!

MINKOWSKI
If they got away, do you think we'd be -

EIFFEL
D-d-d-d-d-d-d. Stop it.
(beat)
Is it within the realm of the remotely possible that they *might* have found a way off the station?

MINKOWSKI
Possibly? I mean, in terms of fluke things that could conceivably hap-

EIFFEL
And! And - Do you have any hard evidence that Captain Lovelace is actually dead?

MINKOWSKI
Well, no, not exa-

EIFFEL
Then you are going to *shut up* and let me have this. Just once. Let me have my badass space commando chick victory cocktail, okay?

On the other side of the hatch separating the rooms, we hear the sound of a MASSIVE AIR GUST as the room is repressurized.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And there, see! That sounds like our air supply getting its groove back. So all in all, I think we can put this down as a good day.

Almost as soon as he says that, there's a BURST OF STATIC THROUGH THE SPEAKERS.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Oh, uh... I guess there's a bit more tacked onto that last recording. One moment, please.

He TYPES for a second and the STATIC DIES DOWN. THE SIXTH RECORDING RESUMES:

ON RECORDING: We hear Captain Lovelace flipping through some pages and muttering to herself. Then, she CLEARS HER THROAT:

LOVELACE
This is a message for any and -

IN RECORDING: There's a KNOCK on a door.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
It's open.

IN RECORDING: The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

SELBERG
(on recording)
Captain Lovelace. Is bad time?

Eiffel and Minkowski both freeze in HORROR.

EIFFEL
Wait a minute...

LOVELACE
Doctor Selberg. No, come in, I was just doing some recordings.

MINKOWSKI
That voice...

EIFFEL
Oh my God.

LOVELACE
How can I help you?

SELBERG
Everything is prepared downstairs. We can get started as soon as you are ready.

MINKOWSKI
No, it can't be.

LOVELACE
Thank you, Doctor Selberg. I wanted to make sure I said that.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I would have never made it this far if you hadn't been here.

EIFFEL
Commander listen to him -

SELBERG
Just doing my job, Captain.

EIFFEL
- that's **Hilbert**.

And so it is.

SELBERG/HILBERT
Always happy to be of assistance.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 18.

WOLF 359

"LET'S KILL HILBERT"

Written By

Sarah Shachat

(WRITER'S NOTE: the following takes place on day 619 of the Hephaestus Mission)

START EPISODE 19

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 0500 HOURS

EIFFEL
C'mon, Hera! Please?

HERA
This is serious, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Which is why I'm asking! I need *gravitas*.

HERA
Fine. Playing it now.

EIFFEL
Yes!

Eiffel's recorder CLICKS ON in time for the sound of A GAVEL coming through the speakers.

EIFFEL
Hear ye, hear ye. Welcome to a very special, very <u>secret</u> Night Court edition of the logs of Douglas Eiffel. On the Docket of the Hephaestus Station this evening: will the crew decide Dr. X should be hung from his toes for lying about even more things? Will cruel and unusual tickling be authorized to extract his many secrets? Will the original mission around Wolf 359 be -

The DOOR OPENS as Minkowski comes in.

EIFFEL
Oops, excuse me, listeners: All rise for the Honorable Justice Commander Minkowski, presiding.

MINKOWSKI
Give me that stupid thing, Eiffel.

She takes the recorder from him and CLICKS it off.

MINKOWSKI
Look, both of you: We've been

running on minimal rest and maximum paranoia since Christmas. The last thing we needed was more disturbing information on the man in our observation deck, but we're not going to let our emotions run away with us, okay? We're just here to discuss our options.

EIFFEL
And when you say "options," you mean "kill him," don't you?

MINKOWSKI
It's...on the table. Yes.

EIFFEL
Isn't that a bit rash? Don't we at least get to shout 'HILLBEERT!' in Shatnerian fury?

MINKOWSKI
We're not jumping into anything. I think it's worth confirming his is the voice on that recording before we make any permanent decisions. If we approached him the right way, I don't think he'd deny it.

EIFFEL
And <u>then</u> what? Tea and crumpets while he regales us with stories about that time when he *killed everyone?*

MINKOWSKI
You don't know that.

EIFFEL
Umm, let me refer you to Exhibit A: the marked absence of Captain Lovelace from the immediate surroundings.

MINKOWSKI
This isn't a trial, and <u>you don't know what happened</u>. Three hours ago you were ready to believe that Lovelace made it back to Earth.

EIFFEL
Yeah, that was *before* I knew her co-pilot was Doctor Sputnik. You think *that* had a happy ending?

In the background, the ship GROANS, like a sub diving.

MINKOWSKI
No. I think he probably killed her. Given the opportunity, he'll definitely try to kill us again.

EIFFEL
Mostly you. I get a bunch of pins stuck in me first.

MINKOWSKI
Which is why the question isn't, "Is Hilbert a mutinous, lying sociopath?" We *know* that. But given the layers of secrets about this place, does Hilbert know *enough* for us to justify keeping him onboard? And if so, then, how do we do it?

HERA
Ridiculous.

Both Eiffel and Minkowski turn their eyes towards the ship around them.

MINKOWSKI
Something you'd like to add, Hera?

HERA
Nothing justifies keeping someone that dangerous around us.

MINKOWSKI
I don't think you're wrong. In the long term. But without *some* idea of what we're dealing with -

EIFFEL
Um, I may actually be playing devil's advocate, but I'd like to state for the record that I'm on Team What's Wrong With Handcuffs?

The ship GROANS again.

HERA
You need to stop treating this like a joke, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Hey, I'm the person for whom the joke tolls. Sure, Hilbert will

turn on us the first chance we give him, but as long as he's fixated on turning me into the ÜberDoug we have leverage on him. Plus lots of chains and locks actually *on* him. Isn't that an acceptable risk for a shot at figuring out what Command's game is? Not to mention helping me beat space pneumonia?

HERA
Sure - <u>if</u> you were really sick.

EIFFEL
What do you mean?

HERA
Isn't it terribly convenient that as soon as Hilbert's life is at risk, he starts talking about this deadly pathogen only *he* can manage? How it's going to kill you if *he's* not around to help? And, of course, the Decima virus is so "complicated" that none of us can even *verify it's really there*?

MINKOWSKI
Are you saying that might just be a trick?

HERA
No, I'm saying it's <u>definitely</u> just a trick.

MINKOWSKI
That's a possibility. But it's a gamble we'd take on Eiffel's life, Hera. Probably mine, too. What we *know* -

HERA
Be <u>quiet</u>.

<u>Holy shit</u>. No one has directed more defiance towards Minkowski in <u>the series</u> than Hera has with those two words.

HERA
What we know is that this man has systematically lied about his identity and manipulated all of us to achieve his objectives. I don't need to remind you two that every

moment you keep him on board you put your lives in jeopardy. But what you seem to be forgetting is that Dr. Hilbert *dismembered me*. Without a moment's hesitation. That monster nearly murdered me. A member of *this* crew. You should have killed him for that alone.

The ship RUMBLES again.

EIFFEL
Hera...

HERA
And I get it, Officer Eiffel. I get you're scared he put something inside you. But I hope you haven't forgotten Emergency Code Alpha Victor. He put that in *me*.

MINKOWSKI
But look, that may be proof he's not lying about -

HERA
From day one, he's lied about everything. Everything he's done has been to deceive us, to make us hesitate, to give him the benefit of the doubt. Don't you get it? He's done this before and you are playing into his hands. Again. So, sure, sign me up for Team Let's Kill Hilbert if that's how you want to put it, but the only way to stop that man from endangering us is to stop his breathing.

The crew absorbs that. Then -

EIFFEL
Ummm, I don't want to wear out an old favorite, but in other news doesn't the star look awfully close today?

HERA
(shut up)
We are in a very stable orbit and aren't about to get distracted by the limits of your depth perception, Officer Eiffel.

There's some ELECTRICITY mixed into the RUMBLING now.

EIFFEL
I'm not kidding! I think the star looks way bigger than it should.

MINKOWSKI
Actually, that doesn't look right to me, either...

HERA
Seriously? You both need to face the facts here. Hilbert is more dangerous than *anything* else on this station. And frankly, this is a cheap way to change the subject, Eiffel. I have the station completely under contro-

BOOM! The ship sounds like it got hit with a hammer.

MINKOWSKI
Ok, we're going into a collision vector.

HERA
My scans are <u>nominal</u>, Commander.

The Bridge SHAKES.

EIFFEL
I don't feel very nominal.

MINKOWSKI
Me neither. Hera, help me plot the course back into orbit and prepare to engage engines on my mark.

HERA
For the last time, the station is completely -

She's cut off by a loud BOOOOM from the bowels of the ship.

EIFFEL
Commander?

MINKOWSKI
I'm trying to pull us out, but I need full control of the nav systems. Hera -

HERA
No! It's fine! I can -

MINKOWSKI
I don't care what you *can,* give me the controls. Right now.

HERA
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
That's an **order**.

Debate over. There's an UPLOAD SOUND from the console.

EIFFEL
Guuuys...

There's a LOUD CRANK as Minkowski wrestles with the controls.

MINKOWSKI
Everybody hold onto something!

The ship continues to SHAKE BADLY. The engines ROAR TO LIFE. Just as it sounds like things are coming apart, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - LATER

We hear METAL CREAKING as the ship re-adjusts to orbit, and maybe the BUZZ of a warning light. Eiffel GROANS.

MINKOWSKI
Everyone alive?

EIFFEL
In theory.

MINKOWSKI
Then help me figure out how much damage we just took on.

EIFFEL
Right.

HERA
Commander, I -

MINKOWSKI
You too, Hera. I need to know if anything's fallen off my station.

HERA
I'll put together a damage

assessment right away. I don't think the station's integrity was-

A big BANG as something somewhere breaks.

HERA
- too compromised by the course correction.

A BEAT as Minkowski and Eiffel ClICK THROUGH scans.

MINKOWSKI
Looks like we're okay, except for hydraulics and filtration.

EIFFEL
The blinky red light of doom is hydraulics?

MINKOWSKI
The primary valve is probably out of alignment and God knows what the pipes are like down there. Get down to engineering and see what you can do, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Commander, my knowledge of plumbing begins and ends with Mario Kart 2.

Minkowski stares him down. Don't. Try. Me.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I'll radio back if I end up in the wrong castle. Sir.

MINKOWSKI
See that you do.

We hear the door SHUT as Eiffel exits. Minkowski waits a moment, then rests her head in her hands.

MINKOWSKI
Just once. A normal meeting. Just once.

PING!

HERA
Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

HERA
I've completed the assessment. I recommend a manual reset of the main hydraulics valve and of air intakes one and four.

MINKOWSKI
Ok. Walk Eiffel through the procedure when he gets to engineering.

HERA
Yes, sir.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, what do I need to know about what just happened?

HERA
It appears there was an... Adjustment in our trajectory.

MINKOWSKI
A considerable adjustment.

HERA
Yes.

MINKOWSKI
What about eight hours ago, in the cargo bay? That makes two near catastrophes today, and you didn't see either of them coming?

HERA
Respectfully, Commander, there's been plenty of things *you* haven't seen coming. I'm doing the best I can here, so just, please, try to sound a little less patronizing?

MINKOWSKI
I'm not being patronizing, I'm being critical. Look, what Hilbert did to you was unforgivable, and I can only imagine how traumatic these past few weeks have been. But for us to work effectively, I need you to take your emotions out

of the equation, and judge this situation for what it is.

HERA
And what would that be?

MINKOWSKI
Delicate and *dangerous*. I need to know that I can trust you, Hera. That I can rely on you to be calm, composed, and levelheaded.

HERA.
Right. Sure. With that maniac still here. Easy-peasy.

MINKOWSKI
Don't take that tone with me. Lives are on the line here, Hera, including your own. So if your functions are too compromised to know what's happened on the station, you need to own up to that.

HERA
What are you saying?

MINKOWSKI
(carefully diplomatic)
I'm saying that maybe for now you should transfer some of your controls over to Eiffel and me. Let us help manage things.

HERA
It's not that simple, Commander. Right now I'm -

Hera CONTINUES TALKING, but her speech is glitching SO BADLY that it becomes impossible to understand what she's saying. Then, after a moment, it ABRUPTLY CUTS OFF.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? Is everything okay?

BZZT! There's a burst of STATIC through the speakers, follow by -

HERA
Yes! No, I'm sorry, Commander. I experienced a temporary strain diverting resources to assist Officer Eiffel's repairs. After he

finishes, I would be happy to
discuss my mission effectiveness.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Concentrate on that for the
moment. I don't mean for you to
think - well, we'll talk.

HERA
Yes, Commander.

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - MEANWHILE

A BOLT CLICKS and the DOOR OPENS as Eiffel walks in.

EIFFEL
All right. Air Intake Repairs for
Dummies, let's do this thing!
(beat)
Uh... Hera? That was your cue for
a pithy retort.

HERA
Sorry, Officer Eiffel. I was...
Momentarily distracted.

EIFFEL
Minkowski's turning on the charm?

HERA
Commander Minkowski takes a very
hands-on approach to her
administrative duties.

EIFFEL
That's one way to put it. Anyway,
which one's the valve guy?

HERA
Lift up the central panel.

Eiffel OPENS it.

EIFFEL
Oh yeah, that looks out of whack.

HERA
Realign the lip into the main
intake again. Then tighten the
heads on valves one and four.

We hear Eiffel WORKING on the PIPES. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Hey Hera? You're not... silently freaking out about our latest Close Encounter of the Red Dwarf Kind? Right? 'Cause -

HERA
It's fine.

Okay, then. Eiffel goes back to work. After another BEAT:

EIFFEL
You know, I hate to admit it, but... Hilbert <u>was</u> the one who patched you up. He has some uses. There might be some way to channel his powers for the forces of good.

HERA
I'm sure we'll find his inner humanitarian any day now.

Eiffel finishes TIGHTENING the last valve.

EIFFEL
Okay, is that it?

HERA
That's it.
(then)
Actually... Wait. There's a bit more to the schematics.

Something about that last thought made her GLITCH BADLY.

HERA
When you're done with that, pull that big red release to your left.

EIFFEL
The one with the danger sticker?

HERA
Yes.

EIFFEL
Uh... you sure about that?

HERA
Yes.

EIFFEL
No, but actually, that thing looks like it shouldn't be messed with.

HERA
Don't you trust me?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Big red release, ten four.

We hear Eiffel TIGHTENING VALVES and SWITCHING the danger release left. There's a HISS of air and a CLICK.

EIFFEL
Hey! I am Handyman, hear me roar!

HERA
Great work, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
It takes a team. Speaking of -

He CLICKS ON his radio. BUZZER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, Commander: All air intake valves lead to Rome. We fixed it.

MINKOWSKI
(over comm)
Great. Do a spot-check on the pipes and then head back up.

EIFFEL
Wilco.

Eiffel starts looking around the pipes, HUMMING to himself. We hear some slight TAPPING on the pipes. After a moment -

BUZZER!

MINKOWSKI
(over comm)
Eiffel! What did you just do?! The entire console's lit up! Half the rooms on the station are reporting life support malfunctions!

Eiffel chooses to respond by CHORTLING SLIGHTLY.

EIFFEL
Really?!

MINKOWSKI
Yes!

EIFFEL
No, no, I know that's bad. It's super... unfunny. Serious thoughts.

No good. He still can't stop GIGGLING.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel!

EIFFEL
I'm sorry! I don't know what's - I just did the thing and flipped the switch.

MINKOWSKI
Then unflip it! Turn it back!

We hear him OPEN THE PANEL back up.

EIFFEL
Hera, are you there? We've got another rimshot, I'm afraid. Gotta reboot... stuff.

In his head, "stuff" was a <u>really funny punchline</u>.

HERA
We should wait a few minutes, Officer Eiffel. Give the automated components time to adjust.

EIFFEL
No time, baby. Will the station blow up if I switch the flip back?

Again, Comedy <u>GOLD</u>.

HERA
Officer Eiffel, speak clearly. What's going on?

We hear a THUD and then even more LAUGHTER.

EIFFEL
I don't know but these walls are real bouncy!

MINKOWSKI
Listen to me! Eiffel: *You're* losing air. It's making you loopy.

Flip the switch back. Whatever it was, turn it back!

EIFFEL
Up... Gotta get... Up and away...

HERA
Why is he losing air? That wasn't supposed to - what's wrong with you?

EIFFEL
What wasn't supposed? Is this another mistake, Hera, or... or, it is a mistake, right?

MINKOWSKI
Flip the damn switch, Eiffel!

Eiffel GROANS and uses the pipes to pull himself to the panel. He FLIPS IT, then collapses into a LAUGHING FIT.

EIFFEL
Wham! Done! Do I get cookie?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, what's going on? Is the pressure normalizing?

HERA
I don't - I don't think so. I can't read anything!

EIFFEL
(borderline incoherent)
Do machines read of electric sheep?

HERA
(panicking now)
I can't read anything!

On Minkowski's side of the Comms, various ALARMS GO OFF.

MINKOWSKI
The air system's gone *berserk*. I'm seeing life support failures in the hanger, the greenhouse, the mess, the obser-
(it hits her)
The observation deck...

HERA
Commander! Could we focus on

Office Eiffel, please?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, does Doctor Hilbert have an air supply?

HERA
Really? Now? I am trying to get the automated systems to -

MINKOWSKI
Answer my question: Can Dr. Hilbert breathe?

HERA
Yes!
(then, guiltily -)
But he won't be able to in another three minutes.

MINKOWSKI
Damnit Hera, I *know* what you're doing!

HERA
I'm trying to fix this! I'm trying to help!

MINKOWSKI
No, you're not. You're trying to get rid of Hilbert.

HERA
(gritted digital teeth)
I can do two things at once! And besides, that *is* helping. It would make things a lot safer here.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you need to calm down and think about what you're doing.

HERA
(not calm)
I am calm! I am calm, and collected, and levelheaded, and I am fixing the problem!

MINKOWSKI
No, you're not. You're scared and you're about to get someone killed.

HERA
Well, it was just a matter of time, wasn't it?! That's what you're thinking, anyway. I'm going to get someone killed because I'm all wrong now, because *he* brought me back wrong. You're going to have to unplug me one way or another - at least this way I can get rid of him. I can do that much for the two of you. Now go help Eiffel!

MINKOWSKI
I can't. I don't have any O2 canisters in the bridge. By the time I get one and make it down to engineering, he'll be gone. You've got to do something.

HERA
I can't. I can't do anything. I can't find the commands. The old me could've done this but now, after what he did to me, I just *can't*.

Minkowski goes very still. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Listen to me, Officer. You are crew of this ship. If Eiffel dies, it's because he trusted you, and you went behind his back. Do you want that?

HERA
No!

MINKOWSKI
Then fix it.

HERA
Have you been listening?! I -

MINKOWSKI
You *can.* You are the smartest person I've ever met, Hera. Focus that intelligence, and save our moron.

Eiffel's starting to GASP for air.

HERA
But -

MINKOWSKI
I trust you. Do it.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT. It's AGONIZING. FINALLY -

We hear a CLICK; a RUSH OF AIR into the room; Eiffel GASPS and COUGHS. The PA CHIMES.

HERA
All station life support systems are normalizing. Your autopilot apologizes for the disruption.
(beat)
I'm really, really sorry.

MINKOWSKI
You still with us, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(coughing)
This is exactly the sort of thing that would not happen on Team What's Wrong With Handcuffs.

MINKOWSKI
Hang on. I'm grabbing the nearest oxygen tank and coming down there.

BUZZ. She's headed out.

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0800 HOURS

Eiffel's TYPING as the door OPENS and Minkowski walks in.

MINKOWSKI
Well, Hilbert's still alive and considerably less smug, so that's one upside to... are you *working*?

EIFFEL
No! Slightly. Sort of. Compiling recordings of the deep space transmissions is weirdly soothing?

MINKOWSKI
If you say so. I just wanted to check in. Busy day.

EIFFEL
You mean Doctor Sex, Lies, and Audiotape? Or the Pod Bay Doors that wouldn't open?

MINKOWSKI
Both. Either. I'm not sure how we cope with another unstable element.

EIFFEL
Same way we've always done. The force of your common sense keeps the rest of us insane-os in check.

MINKOWSKI
Constructive analysis as always, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I also do Bar Mitzvahs.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Well, just don't do them for too much longer. I want to regroup tomorrow and -

EIFFEL
Gotcha, Commander. You too.

MINKOWSKI
Good night.

EIFFEL
Night.

The door SHUTS as Minkowski EXITS. Eiffel TYPES a bit more.

EIFFEL
Are you there, Hera?

Only the station's HUM answers him.

EIFFEL
You are. You always are, I guess. I keep forgetting because, I mean, it's weird, right? I can't imagine how that must be for you. Especially when you want some space. Here in... space.

Still only SILENCE.

EIFFEL
I'm not gonna pretend I'm cool with almost being turned into the wrench that killed Mr. Body. But I'm here for you.

Sooo... I can play some I Heart Alien Radio, and you can just enjoy it because you saved my life today and were awesome. Or, we can come up with more ways to call Hilbert a lying liar who lies. Or, I can ask you how you're doing, and, just, how can I help?

For a HALF-BEAT, more SILENCE. But then -

HERA
Can it be all three?

Eiffel CHUCKLES. He FLICKS A SWITCH and begins TUNING HIS RADIO.

EIFFEL
You're the multi-tasker, darlin'.

Out of the STATIC, a PIECE OF MUSIC EMERGES.

EIFFEL
You starting to feel better about that, by the way?

Hera PAUSES before her answer -

HERA
Not really. A little bit. It's a little hard to explain. There's just a lot of little things to keep track of, so when...

And as Hera finally starts to unburden herself, Eiffel begins to play with his controls, and we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 19.

WOLF 359

"THE PARANOIA GAME"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 625 of the Hephaestus Mission)

START OF EPISODE 20

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - 1100 HOURS

Minkowski and Hilbert are alone, tense air between them.

MINKOWSKI
And you never thought any of this was worth sharing with the rest of us?

HILBERT
You knew that I had served on other deep space missions. Beyond that, I fail to see how the details are relevant.

MINKOWSKI
It's relevant because you were experiments on human beings.

HILBERT
(matter of fact)
Yes - the same experiments I have been running on this expedition. With the same amount of clearance from Command. Is that all?

MINKOWSKI
(teeth gritted)
No, Doctor Selberg. You're going to tell me one more thing: What happened to Captain Lovelace?

There's a LONG, SILENT BEAT. Finally -

HILBERT
The... Rudimentary escape pod she constructed malfunctioned. It fell into the star's gravity well, and was incinerated. She is dead.

MINKOWSKI
That's it?

HILBERT
That's it.

CLICK! The conversation freezes. CLICK. We hear the sound of AUDIO REWINDING. CLICK. And then once again, we hear:

HILBERT (CONT'D)
It fell into the star's gravity well, and was incinerated. She is dead.

CLICK. REWIND. CLICK.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
It fell into the star's gravity well, and was incinerated. She is dead.

CLICK. REWIND. By now it's become apparent that we're listening to a RECORDING, and we're actually in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1500 HOURS

As the recording REWINDS again, we hear a DOOR OPEN.

EIFFEL
Minkowski?
(sees what she's doing)
How many times are you gonna listen to that recording?

MINKOWSKI
As many times as it takes for me to know whether he's lying or not.

CLICK.

HILBERT
(on recording)
It fell into the star's gravity well, and was incinerated on contact. She is dead.

CLICK.

MINKOWSKI
(sigh)
He admitted to being Dr. Selberg pretty immediately. I guess he thought there wasn't much to gain by lying. Or he didn't care. Either way, his version of the story matches what we heard on Lovelace's logs.
(beat, then:)
Eiffel, I hate this plan of yours.

EIFFEL
You got a better one?

MINKOWSKI
Look:

We hear her TYPING on the console, then TAPPING a SCREEN.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
You see that? That's a class 4 solar storm. A class 4 storm I'm going to have to steer us through on manual, thanks to the hiccups in our autopilot's navigational system. How is this a good moment to let Hilbert do some repairs?

EIFFEL
Rewiring our fiber optics center will help get Hera's nav system back on track, and Hilbert can probably take care of that in 15 minutes. With a hand tied behind his back. And then way, you can have A.I. backup for space hurricane season.

MINKOWSKI
And what happens when he decides to sabotage the system?

EIFFEL
Not a great move for him, given that he's still *on the station*. Look, Commander, I'll be supervising him the entire time -

MINKOWSKI
Not as reassuring as you think.

EIFFEL
(powering through)
- and even he's not gonna try anything with a gun pointed at his head. All I need is a maintenance toolkit and a side-arm.

Minkowski makes a noise that's half SIGH and half GROWL.

MINKOWSKI
All right, fine. But you keep your eyes peeled, you don't let him say any words longer than three syllables, and you don't screw up.
(beat)
Okay, let's be realistic.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
And you comms me the very instant you screw up.

EIFFEL
Hey! What makes you so sure -

MINKOWSKI
Because you are you and he is he and I am me and we are all together.

EIFFEL
Goo goo g'joob?

MINKOWSKI
Oh good Lord, it's finally catching. Ugh, help me do the inventory on this toolkit, and then get out of my sight.

And off that, we

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - DATA CENTER - LATER

Over the sound a bolt being fastened:

HILBERT
Hrmmm... Socket wrench.

EIFFEL
Socket wrench.

We hear Eiffel handing over the tool to Hilbert, then more FASTENING. After a moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
How much longer?

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel, are the handcuffs really necessary? My work would -

EIFFEL
You bet your ass they're necessary. You stay right where you are: handcuffed to the casing of the fiber optics center. The toolbox is all the way over there, fastened down on the other side of the room.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You only get a tool if I hand it to you, and you don't get uncuffed until all the tools are back in their box. Then I take you straight back to *your* box. Nothing goes missing, everyone is happy, and no Communications Officers are harmed during the making of this film, capisce? Now how much longer?

HILBERT
Three more connections to patch through.

A LOW, GROANING NOISE that comes through the walls.

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
We should be reaching the solar storm's event horizon. We may start feeling some turbulence.

EIFFEL
(snaps finger)
Hilbert?

HILBERT
Screwdriver.

EIFFEL
Screwdri-

A SOFT WARNING CHIRP goes off.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Ugh, what now?

HERA
My sensors just started picking up an electrical irregularity in the back-up life support processor.

EIFFEL
Ugh, great. Let's take a look.

He POPS OPEN a PANEL, and we hear him immediately RECOIL. We start hearing a recurring noise of ELECTRICAL SPARKING.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Christ! Hera, when's the last time anybody opened this up?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I think there's like new species of mold growing in here. The smell...

HILBERT
If memory serves, that was your job.

EIFFEL
Shut up. I can still downgrade your quarters from Shawshank to Stalag Luft.

HILBERT
Threats only work if the threatened person knows what -

EIFFEL
Shut. Up.
(back to the panel)
Hera, this looks like an electrical fire waiting to happen. Will we die if this thing's offline for two or three days?

HERA
No, but -

She's drowned out by the sound of a FIRE EXTINGUISHER being emptied into the processor. The sound of SPARKING STOPS.

EIFFEL
Problem solved. Put "processor repair" on our to-do list, and remind me to refill the extinguisher in Minkowski's toolkit.

HERA
You *could* have just hit the "Off" switch.

EIFFEL
True, but my way makes me feel like a big man. All right, Hilbert, where were we?

HILBERT
Screwdriver.

EIFFEL
Right, screwdri - no, I gave you the screwdriver.

HILBERT
No, you did not.

EIFFEL
Yes, I did.

HILBERT
No, you did not.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well, it's not in the toolkit, so you *definitely* have it.

HILBERT
But I don't.

EIFFEL
Neither do I.

BEAT. Then, Hilbert shrugs.

HILBERT
Well, is not problem. There is backup screwdriver in kit.

EIFFEL
Wait a minute.
(beat)
How did you steal it?

HILBERT
Why would I even want a screwdriver?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Like... A staggeringly vast number of evil plans.

HERA
Actually, there's quite a lot you could do with it.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I *don't have* screwdriver!

EIFFEL
All right, let's just cut the crap. Hera, how did he steal it?

HERA
How am I supposed to know?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... because you're the eye in the sky? Aren't you like... Borderline omniscient about this stuff?

HERA
Yes, I am - unless somebody shuts off my fiber optics. That tends to hamper my image intake.

HILBERT
Why did you think it was called the optical system?

EIFFEL
There's like a gazillion systems on this station, nobody knows what they all do!

HERA
I do.

HILBERT
So do I.

EIFFEL
Shut up!

HILBERT
Look, remember what <u>you</u> said: I have been handcuffed to console casing. Toolkit is on other side of room. There is no way for me to have reached the screwdriver.

HERA
I... I hate to say it, Officer Eiffel, but... What he's saying makes sense. I don't think he *could* have stolen the screwdriver.

EIFFEL
Y-you really didn't steal it?

HILBERT
No. Promise.

EIFFEL
But then... But...

BUZZER!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh no.

BUZZER! Eiffel steels himself, CLEARS HIS THROAT, and -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(Mr. Nonchalance)
Hello, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Has everything gone horribly wrong yet?

EIFFEL
(scoffs)
What? Psshhh.... Nooooooooo?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Nooooooooo?

EIFFEL
I-I-I-I mean...

MINKOWSKI
Oh God. What's happened?

EIFFEL
(lightning fast)
Nothing's happened why would something have happened what a crazy thing to say what's that Hera you need me for that thing that's not an emergency okay gotta take care of that bye Commander.

MINKOWSKI
(seething)
Eiffel!

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
(slight panic)
Okay, okay... We can figure it out. Where could a screwdriver be?

HILBERT
Have you checked your pockets?

EIFFEL
(snaps)
<u>OF COURSE I'VE CHECKED -</u>

He stops halfway through, and we hear him PATTING HIMSELF DOWN and CHECKING HIS POCKETS. After a second -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
OF COURSE I'VE CHECKED MY POCKETS.

HERA
Eiffel, calm down. Nobody has come in or gone out of the room. Whatever happened, it has to be somewhere in there.

EIFFEL
Well, I didn't drop it, it would have floated into my face by now.

HERA
Then there has to be another explanation.

EIFFEL
Yeah, but -
(sneezes)
- What could it be?

HILBERT
Ooooh.

EIFFEL
Oh?

HERA
Oh?

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Oh. Very clever.

EIFFEL
What?

I know what happened. I know where is screwdriver. Robot took it.

HERA
What?! I did *not*.

HILBERT
Yes, you did.

EIFFEL
No, hold on. Why would Hera want a screwdriver?

HILBERT
She does not want screwdriver. She wants *revenge*.

HERA
Oh, this is gonna be rich.

HILBERT
A.I. Still angry at me over... Unpleasantness. She come up with plan to frame me. She feeds you the idea of doing repairs, suggests forcing me to help. Then, at critical moment, she manufactures distraction. Small electrical fire, easy enough to contain, but enough to create a window of opportunity. Then, when screwdriver vanish everybody blame Hilbert. Everything is always Hilbert's fault. Clever.

EIFFEL
Hera, that doesn't make any sense?

HERA
Is that a statement or a question, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
A statement?
(beat)
You... Did sorta-kinda-maybe try to kill him a little while ago...

BEAT.

HERA
Okay. Let's say - for the sake of argument - that I really did come up with this Machiavellian little scheme. And let's imagine that I have somehow arrived at the conclusion that the best time to try this is when my functions are even more impaired than they normally are. All right, sure. I manipulate everyone on the crew to get you into that room. And, fine, I create the electrical fire as a diversionary tactic, that makes sense. But how - *and details please* - do I steal the screwdriver?

EIFFEL
(the soul of indignation)
Yeah! How would she even -

HERA
Shut up, Eiffel.

HILBERT
You - ah. Yes.
(beat)
That is good question.

EIFFEL
So Hera couldn't have stolen it.

HILBERT
No.
(then)
Not unless... She had accomplice.

EIFFEL
Of for God's sake...

HILBERT
Yes, now I see it clearly. You two have been working together this entire time. She is the brains, you are... Not brains.

EIFFEL
Uh, why would I want to get involved in this crazy plan?
(he sneezes twice)
Okay, that's allergies, *not* dramatic irony, okay?!

HILBERT
This is all a conspiracy. And you are all in on it!

EIFFEL
Okay, first of all: glass house, meet *ginormous boulder*. Secondly, if that was actually what was happening, why would we be trying to fix it?

HERA
If we just wanted to get you in trouble, we would've already ratted you out to the Commander.

HILBERT
Well, maybe you taking screwdriver is just phase one of bigger, more convoluted plot!

EIFFEL
I didn't take the stupid screwdriver!

HILBERT
For all I know you have it tucked inside your clothing!

EIFFEL
I could say the same about you!

HILBERT
So neither one of us can be sure!

EIFFEL
Sure we can! I can prove it to you right now!

We hear a ZIPPER being PULLED DOWN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
How'd you like that!?

HILBERT
I like it just fine!

And as another article of clothing gets UNZIPPED, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - DATA CENTER - LATER

It's been a few hours. Various bits of detached equipment, and loose panels are now floating. We hear the DOOR OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Well, we're finally past that
(sees inside the room)
Oh dear Lord. You've really outdone yourselves this time.

EIFFEL
Hey Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, how... No, hang on. What is... No. Just... Just why?

EIFFEL
Everything is <u>fine</u>, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I know your relationship with the English language is strictly casual, but you... I...

Allow me to tell you what's NOT FINE: Every piece of machinery being in pieces, large sections of the floor, walls, and ceiling being detached, and, oh yes, tiny detail, both of you being naked. Honestly, I *hope* that something has gone horribly wrong, because the alternative that presents itself is too horrifying to consider.

EIFFEL
Look, Commander, I know how -

HILBERT
Oh! Eiffel, stop!

EIFFEL
What?

HILBERT
Don't you see? If it wasn't me, and it wasn't you, and it wasn't Hera, then that leaves...

EIFFEL
Oh! Oh, yes! Yes, I see it now! It all makes sense!

MINKOWSKI
What makes sense?

EIFFEL
The screwdriver!

MINKOWSKI
The what?

EIFFEL
(j'accuse!)
The screwdriver! The one I didn't take, and Hilbert didn't take, and Hera couldn't take, because there was never even a screwdriver in the toolkit, was there? You never liked this plan, you thought it was too risky. So you say to yourself, "Why wait for something to go wrong?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Why not just make something go wrong from the start and be done with it?"

HILBERT
(totally in synch)
So before you give him toolkit, you take screwdriver. And that way, once we began repairs and noticed it was gone, we focus on that, not on whatever mistake Officer Eiffel was going to make -

EIFFEL
- or whatever evil plan Hilbert was cooking up.

HILBERT
Instead we pay attention to *your* problem, the one you orchestrated, the one you can swoop in and solve like big hero.

EIFFEL
How else could you have been so sure that something was going to go wrong?! You had to be controlling both sides of the equation! The perfect crime!

Minkowski CLAPS slowly, dripping with sarcasm.

MINKOWSKI
Oh well done, you two. Very smart.

EIFFEL
So you admit it?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, you've seen through my intricate web of lies. Drat. Unfortunately, you've also forgotten that we did a completely inventory on the toolkit *after* I gave it to you. So I would have had to have taken the screwdriver after you came into this room.
(pointed)
While I was *flying the big spaceship*.

EIFFEL
Well - oh.

All the air goes out of his argument.

HILBERT
(snaps his fingers)
I have explanation for that!

EIFFEL
(hah! In your face!)
See? He has explanation for that!

HILBERT
It involves large, powerful magnet.

EIFFEL
It involves a large, powerful mag-
(he realizes how stupid that sounds)
Okay, you... May have a point there.

MINKOWSKI
(diplomatic but angry)
Okay. Before I hit both you, put your pants back on, and walk me through what the hell's been going on here. From the beginning.

Off of that, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - DATA CENTER - LATER

Two more hours later. Even more debris and splintered pieces of room float through the air. Eiffel and Minkowski lean against the wall. Hilbert is still in handcuffs.

MINKOWSKI
Okay... What if it accidentally floated into the central server's casing? And got lodged somewhere in the cables?

EIFFEL
No... We already checked there.

MINKOWSKI
Oh.

Back to the drawing board. BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
How about the overhead lighting system? It could have gotten -

HERA
No.

Even Hera sounds exhausted by now.

HERA (CONT’D)
We already took it apart. Twice.

MINKOWSKI
Oh.

EIFFEL
This is officially crazy. We have checked inch of this room. None of us have left since the screwdriver went missing. Where the hell could it have gone off to?

There's a LOUD CLANGING NOISE that comes through the walls.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And why is it still doing that? I thought we were through the turbulence.

MINKOWSKI
We are. Must be... some gravitational flux, I guess.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I... I think it may be time to call it a -

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

EIFFEL
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
This room is a closed environment. There's no one here besides the four of us, and screwdrivers don't just magically disappear into thin air. We can crack this.

HILBERT
What if... That is not true?

The energy shifts as the room turns towards Hilbert.

EIFFEL
You mean... What if screwdrivers *do* just magically disappear?

HILBERT
Of course not, *idiot*. What if we are not the only ones here?

MINKOWSKI
Oh come on. Haven't we had enough of the paranoia game?

HILBERT
What other explanation could there be? Screwdriver is gone, someone *must* have taken it. And if none of us have it, then...

EIFFEL
Hera, is that even remotely possible?

HERA
No. My senses would have detected another human presence on board the station.

HILBERT
The same way you would have detected an old, out of use laboratory that was attached to the hangar bay?

HERA
That's different.

HILBERT
Maybe, but... If your senses were attuned to overlook an entire room, is it that implausible that they could have been attuned to overlook a person?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I guess it's not *that* -

MINKOWSKI
Tell me you're not buying into this crap, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Commander, I'm sorry, but being on this station has made... whatever the opposite of skeptical is. I mean, compared to alien transmissions? Doesn't sound *that* insane. Maybe there is someone else on this station with us. Maybe they've been here from the start.

For a moment they all sit in silence. The SHIP CREAKS. Through the wall comes the faint sound of BANGING and CLANGING. Is there really someone else with them?

MINKOWSKI
Nope. Nope. Just stop with the scared eyes, Eiffel. I refuse to believe anyone else is on board this station.

HERA
Well, what's the alternative?

MINKOWSKI
Something logical. Something that doesn't make us more crazy.

EIFFEL
I don't think that's on the menu for tonight.

MINKOWSKI
Get up.

EIFFEL
(weary)
What?

MINKOWSKI
Get up. Walk me through what happened one more time.

Eiffel, Hilbert, and Hera all GROAN.

EIFFEL
Again?!

MINKOWSKI
Again.

Eiffel rises with newfound vehemence.

EIFFEL
All right, you wanna go through it again? Fine, let's get nuts!

By 'go nuts' he apparently means including self-supplied sound effects.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm standing over here with Dr. Tech Support, watching him rewire the system. Whirr, whirr! Then he asks for a screwdriver, so I go over to the toolbox and pop it open. Click! Then, Hera chimes in - bing-bong! - with a warning about the processor. I float over and open it up, it's really gross - UGH! - and it's sparking - BZZT! BZZT! - so I hose it down with the fire extinguisher - FFFFSSSSSH! And then I get back up here and somehow while I was gone the screwdriver has vanished! FWOOSH!

There! Do things make sense now? Let's hear it one more time, just to make sure, all right!?

Whirr, whirr! Click! Bing bong! Open, UGH! BZZT, BZZT! FFFFSSSSSH! And last but not least, FWOOSAAAAAAAAH!

Halfway through that last effect Eiffel lets out a STARTLED YELL as SOMETHING touches him from behind. Minkowski and Hilbert both jump, too. We hear her DRAWING HER GUN.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, get clear! Get away from it!

HILBERT
Ohhh!

HERA
What is happening? What is happening?

We begin to hear a few odd noises. TRILLING. LOW GROWLING.

MINKOWSKI
It's going for the toolbox! Eiffel, grab it!

EIFFEL
Uhhhhh... Got it!

HERA
You people never reconnected by optics system! Somebody tell me what is happening!

MINKOWSKI
There's something reaching down from the air vent. It's a... What is that even?

EIFFEL
It kinda looks like -
(sneezes)
- Like a tentacle. With a flower.

HILBERT
I think it's a vine.

EIFFEL
A vine? You mean like - ?

And then it hits them all. Massive wave of relief:

EVERYONE
The plant monster took the screwdriver!

COLOSSAL SIGHS of RELIEF ring around the room. Eiffel and Hilbert both LAUGH WEAKLY.

HILBERT
Of course...

EIFFEL
The reason why we couldn't find it in the room...

HERA
It was never even in the room!

MINKOWSKI
It just reached in through the air vent and grabbed the screwdriver while you were distracted.

For another moment they all just bask in enormous relief.

Then, one by one, their jitters settle. They grow silent.

In the air vent, the Plant Monster GROWLS.

BEAT.

BEAT.

Slowly but surely something else, something very different, dawns on all of them:

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Why would it want a screwdriver?What would... Is this a bad thing?

HERA
It's... Definitely not a good thing.

HILBERT
Undoubtedly.

EIFFEL
(giggling nervously)
Umm... Dum dum dum?

ANOTHER BEAT. The Plant Monster GROWLS again. Finally:

HERA
Now, if it's not too much trouble, could somebody... Please... Reconnect my optics system!?

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 20.

WOLF 359

"MINKOWSKI COMMANDING"

by

Sarah Shachat

(WRITER'S NOTE: Episode 21 begins on Mission Day 631, and ends on Mission Day 645)

START EPISODE 21

BEGIN RECORDING:

Section 1

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - 1100 HOURS

We hear A BURST OF STATIC. Minkowski's climbing through the station's air ducts. The ship GROANS, and she pauses to adjust her helmet's camera.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. Day 6. Based on the encounter at 0400, I believe the enemy is tactically more advanced than my initial estimates. Hera's scans are next to useless up here, but I *know* I'm being watched. It must have extremely powerful vibratory sensors, and with all this metal... it's like it has eyes everywhere. Any creek, any knock, grab a handhold too hard or push off too fast, and -

The vents GROAN again. She continues more softly:

MINKOWSKI
It's using the shadows. I don't know exactly *how* it's moving so fast, but it's cloaking its tracks. Misdirecting me, and then striking right where I can't see. I need to find some way to -

BUZZER! She jumps as her comm goes off.

EIFFEL
(over comm)
Hey Minkowski! I'm about done frying up some almost-huevos rancheros. Is your mouth watering for some golden delicious - well, they're kinda green and stringy, but I think I've really pushed the culinary envel-

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! I already told you, this is a Priority One mission. You're

not supposed to use this line
except to report a sighting.

EIFFEL
Tell me you're not still playing
tag with the Plant Monster?

MINKOWSKI
It isn't - look, I'm hunting this
thing down before it strangles us
in our sleep. What's on *your*
agenda for today?

EIFFEL
Uh, today I was gonna try
rebooting the sensory array so
that we can get a better readout
of the-

MINKOWSKI
Ugh. Useless.

EIFFEL
Hey. I know the Plant Monster
isn't exactly Bambi's Mom, but
harm has it really done? Can't we
just let sleeping dogweeds lie?

MINKOWSKI
It chose to escalate hostilities,
not me.

EIFFEL
(you weirdo)
It took a screwdriver.

MINKOWSKI
How do we know that's all it
took?! Or what it wants the
screwdriver for?! This thing is
sentient, Eiffel. It's *clever*, and
it can plan.

The metal CREAKS.

EIFFEL
Yeah, but if all it's doing is -

MINKOWSKI
It's absurd enough we've shared
the station with a rogue,
unidentified life form for months.
I refuse to just do nothing before
the situation spirals out of

control! Before it blindsides us
with -

More REALLY OMINOUS CREAKING.

MINKOWSKI
- with... did you hear that?!

EIFFEL
No. Are you sure you're -

MINKOWSKI
(angry whisper)
Shut up.

BEAT. CREEEEAAAAK.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, it's -

Suddenly, the Plant Monster ROARS. Minkowski COCKS HER GUN. Several somethings WHIP BY the mic and Minkowski goes down with A THUD. THUNK THUNK THUNK. Then QUIET.

EIFFEL
Uh... Minkowski?

CUT TO:

Section 2

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - 1600 HOURS

We hear A BURST OF STATIC. It's the following day.

MINKOWSKI
Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. Day 7. My sweep of foredeck ventilation system's ongoing. No results yet, but I'm tracking a series of what I... guess are prints? These long, wavy lines scored into the metal. I don't think they're wear marks on the vents. They may be thorns, some sort of tiny claw it's using to lever itself. Maybe *teeth*. That might be how it's -

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
(over comm)
Hey, Minkowski! What are you up to?

MINKOWSKI
The *mission*, Eiffel, and I've told you about using this line for -

EIFFEL
Wait, wait, wait, I thought you agreed to take it easy today. Hera and I are gonna have our epic pong rematch! We need you to ref!

MINKOWSKI
One: that would be an incredibly inane waste of my time. Two: I'm the Commander. I don't have to "agree" to anything.

EIFFEL
See, that's funny, *Commander*, because I have a very vivid memory of you *agreeing* to put down your Holy Hand Grenades and chillax. You know, while I POPPED YOUR SHOULDER BACK IN PLACE?! And -

CLICK. Minkowski SHUTS OFF the Comms.

MINKOWSKI
God, he's insufferable.
(clears her throat)
I think I understand how this thing moves now. It was pretty simple to extrapolate its patterns, partition the station into a Cartesian grid, and ID the hostile zones. Only six hours.

The vent she's in GROANS a little.

MINKOWSKI
(whispering)
Alright. Approaching the line into Zone 1 now. Weapons free. No visual yet... Turning left, up, into dark territory...

A BEAT.

Then we hear something TAPPING SOFTLY on the metal. Minkowski inches forward.

MINKOWSKI
(I'm hunting wabbits)
C'mere, you slimy thief.

A BIG METALLIC BANG. GUNFIRE GUNFIRE GUNFIRE. Metal RUMBLES, and then with a CRASH, TEARS APART.

MINKOWSKI
Did...did I get it?

It's quiet for a BEAT.

Then we hear the PA CHIME.

HERA
Umm, hello? Crew? So there may or may not be a giant hole in the ceiling of the mess now? From, um, bullet ricochets? Should... should someone with hands do something about that?

Minkowski GROANS. We -

CUT TO:

Section 3

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOWER DECKS - 1500 HOURS

We hear A BURST OF STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. Day 9. Given the mission's... Personnel deficiencies, and the mobility of the target, I've had to change tactics. I think if I can corner this thing I might be able to douse it with -

BUZZER. BUZZER. BUZZER.

SIGH. She clicks on the Comms.

EIFFEL
(over comm)
Um, a *word* please!

MINKOWSKI
What is it now, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
So here I am, minding my own business, off to get more copper for *our* sensory array circuitry, when suddenly, out of the blue, there's A NET pinning me to A

WALL! Care to explain what is happening?!

MINKOWSKI
What does it look like?

EIFFEL
It looks like I'm stuck in a trap built by Wile E. Coyote on *SPEED*. Where did you even get the material to make A NE- No, no, I don't wanna know. Just come cut me down, please!

MINKOWSKI
Fine, I'll swing by the supply closet once my rotation is over.

EIFFEL
And when might that be?

MINKOWSKI
Three hours. Maybe four, depending on how long it takes me to rig the hangar bay.

EIFFEL
WHAT?!

MINKOWSKI
Just hang tight, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
NO WAY! NO WAY! MINKOWSKI! YOU PRIGGISH, AUTHORITARIAN MA-

CLICK. Good. No more comm, no more distractions.

MINKOWSKI
As I was saying: I've started laying pressure traps at key locations around the station. When it gets snagged in one of them, it'll be doused with sulphuric acid. Which reminds me: I need to make more acid.

CUT TO:

Section 4

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OUTER CORRIDOR - 1400 HOURS

We hear A BURST OF STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. Day 10. The acid may have... been a mistake. Turns out it's developed an immunity to it. And possibly an... affinity. It seems to work like some sort of growth hormone. So now it's bigger. And it has retractible spikes. That it can shoot.

But this changes *nothing*. I've done some analysis and made adjustments. Every contact with the monster has a striking commonality: proximity to high-level light sources. So complete darkness might serve to weaken it, or disorient it.

Minkowski adjusts her grip on her gun and looks up.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? I want you ready to shut off the station lights except for the Comms Room. I want absolute darkness.

HERA
Um, just for the record? I have to say that this doesn't seem all that... Advisable.

MINKOWSKI
I am giving you a direct order to kill all the station lights on my mark. Three... two...

BUZZER!

EIFFEL
(over comms)
Umm, sorry to break into your frequency, Commander, but... could we talk for a sec?

MINKOWSKI
You have *one* sec. Go.

EIFFEL
Right. Okay. So... it's actually really weird for me to be on this side of things. But, I want you to know, before we start, that we

admire you, and support you, and we want you to catch the plant -

HERA
This is an intervention.

EIFFEL
Hera! Ease into it!

MINKOWSKI
A. *What*?

EIFFEL
It's just a conversation! Just a friendly conversation where some people, who are concerned about how it's been incredibly dangerous to go anywhere on the station for the past few days, tell you... that... you know...

HERA
We're worried about you.

EIFFEL
(faking Hilbert's voice)
Da. Ve find dis very concernink, Comrade Commander.

MINKOWSKI
You - is that supposed to be Hilbert? You sound *nothing* like him, Eiffel. And you both are microscopically close to insubordination. *And, worst of all,* you probably scared it off!

HERA
Honestly, that may be for the best.

EIFFEL
We just... we both think you need to get some perspective.

HERA
To reassess your response to this whole plant monster situation. In a calm, collected, and level-headed manner.

MINKOWSKI
Is that right?

EIFFEL
(desperate peacemaker)
C'mon, do you know how unnerving it is for me to be like, this thing she's doing, it's gotten too crazy? I'm Mr. Too Crazy! But you're going on 10 days of Captain Ahab's SpaceWalkabout, and <u>it isn't working</u>. The Heart of Darkness lighting? When does that ever end well?

MINKOWSKI
I have night-vision gear, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oh, well *that's* fine then.

MINKOWSKI
In case you two goof-offs haven't noticed, we're juggling a lot of problems right now. I am <u>solving</u> one.

EIFFEL
I get it. I do. But there has to be a safer way. I mean, plants still need oxygen, right? Hera, can't you just vent the air out of all the rooms one by one?

HERA
It would need to be coordinated, but that's definitely an -

MINKOWSKI
Right, because our air supply's been impeccably managed. It would *never* slip out of control, killing everyone.

Well that was phrased badly, and all three of them know it. Minkowski lets out an ANNOYED SIGH, instantly regretful.

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry, Hera. That was uncalled for.

HERA
You know what? You clearly have bigger things to worry about.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I -

HERA
Good hunting, Commander.

Around her, the LIGHTS POWER OFF. We hear the sound of her NIGHT VISION GOGGLES engaging.

EIFFEL
That was bad.

MINKOWSKI
I know.

EIFFEL
She'll... she'll come around. Look, if you've gotta work this most dangerous game thing out of your system, I understand. It's fine. But, just remember that we're here, okay?

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

BUZZER. A beat as Minkowski is left alone.

MINKOWSKI
Okay...

Section 5

FADE TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - 0900 HOURS

We hear A BURST OF STATIC. There's also a regular, soft BEEPING, like some kind of SONAR DEVICE.

MINKOWSKI
Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. Hour three in the black. 85 minutes of battery remaining on my night vision gear. The last motion sensors are in place now, so hopefully this scanner will -

We hear something CRACKLING. Minkowski investigates.

MINKOWSKI
What the? Is it growing out of the bolts? Um, it seems I've encountered some kind of florescent moss. It's this gnarled, tangled, shaking - Oh

God, it's definitely organic. I don't know if this is some sort of waste product or a spore or something. Maybe a territorial marker. Hmm.

She thinks for a moment. Then she hits a button. BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel? I could use some help.

EIFFEL
(over comm)
Oh thank God. I am <u>thrilled</u> to hear you say that, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Patch me through to Hilbert.

EIFFEL
...not what I had in mind.

MINKOWSKI
Just do it.

Eiffel SIGHS, but we hear him TYPING some COMMANDS. After a moment - BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over comm)
Good morning, Commander. Always so nice to chat.

MINKOWSKI
Glad you feel that way, Doctor. Now's your chance to share all the breakthroughs you made with our favorite experimental sample.

HILBERT
Has anything happened to Officer Eiffel?

MINKOWSKI
Not Eiffel, no. I'm talking about the Mutant Plant Monster you let loose on my station.

HILBERT
Ah, Specimen 34? A particularly fascinating hybrid, if I do say so myself. Controlling exponential gr-

MINKOWSKI
I don't care how you made it, Hilbert. Are its instincts predatory? And can it breed?

HILBERT
Based on the histories of parent species, I -

MINKOWSKI
In two sentences or less.

Hilbert SIGHS.

HILBERT
In terms of its genetics, both of scenarios are possible. But I know as much about how it behaves out of captivity as you do.

Minkowski's tracker starts BEEPING louder.

HILBERT
Less, perhaps.

EIFFEL
Um, I hate to break up this meeting of the Horticulture Appreciation Society, but is that a bad sound?

MINKOWSKI
It means it's close. I've got another monitor up in the bridge; can you get to it so I can mute mine?

EIFFEL
Am I going to regret this?

MINKOWSKI
No. This is it, Eiffel.

HILBERT
Commander, I highly discourage a frontal confrontation with Specimen 34. It's simply too adaptive to external stimuli for -

MINKOWSKI
Spare me, Hilbert. This thing's been a *cinch* to corner. But for the sake of the few bodily comforts you have left, you're

gonna help make sure I get it.

A BEAT while Minkowski LOWERS THE VOLUME on her tracker.

EIFFEL
Okay. Um. I'm here and reading 95 meters away from your position. Personally, I think that's a perfectly acceptable distance to keep away from - woah, okay, 75 meters now, heading towards you.

MINKOWSKI
Outstanding.

EIFFEL
Clearly we have different definitions of -

HILBERT
Eiffel, is Specimen 34 moving laterally or vertically?

EIFFEL
Um... The difference being...?

MINKOWSKI
Oh nevermind. I'm gonna flush it out in the maintenance catwalk and meet it in the open.

HILBERT
You may not want to -

EIFFEL
50 meters! Is this scanner set to creepy?

Minkowski GRUNTS and starts really moving forward now.

EIFFEL
Uh, 35?

The vents SHUDDER and we hear distinct HITS on the metal.

EIFFEL
20, no wait..25, uh...15?

MINKOWSKI
Damn it, Eiffel!

HILBERT
Commander, perhaps I -

EIFFEL
Um, ten! Ten! Ten and closing.

Minkowski COCKS HER GUN.

MINKOWSKI
C'mon then. Where the hell are you?

EIFFEL
Three, two, one meter! You're right on top of it!

MINKOWSKI
I'm not. I don't see -

Minkowski YELPS in shock.

HILBERT
Minkowski?

EIFFEL
Are you okay?!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. Eiffel, this isn't all of it.

EIFFEL
What do you mean, "This isn't <u>all</u> of it?"

MINKOWSKI
I mean, it's here. But it's just one tentacle. It's just... Floating. It's still moving, and, why is it so *hairy*? But the rest of it - God, where is the rest of it?

HILBERT
Commander, I believe the appropriate response in military parlance is to 'check your six.'

Minkowski turns around, staring and breathing hard.

MINKOWSKI
I don't see -

ACK. Suddenly the tentacle SNAPS to life, wraps around Minkowski's neck, and starts CHOKING HER from behind.

For the next few moments, we hear the sounds of an EPIC

FIGHT. PUNCH, PUNCH, POW, GACK, CHOKE, ZAP, BAFF, BONK, BANG, BANG, WHIP, HIT.

Finally, there's a BIG, SQUISHY THUMP. We can hear Minkowski PANTING.

EIFFEL
Minkowski...? You still alive?

MINKOWSKI
(heavy breaths)
The tentacle... is dead... it's dead....

EIFFEL
...Congratulations?

MINKOWSKI
Double check the scanner. Is anything near my position?

EIFFEL
Uhh, nope. Scanner's blank, so I don't think so. Not unless, like, it figured out how to move through the walls or something.

Cue the sound of CREAKING METAL.

MINKOWSKI
Why must you say words?

There's a violent SNAP of METAL. The monster ROARS. BOOOOM! Minkowski YELLS. KAPOW! BANG! WAR CRY! CRASH!

Section 6

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - 1200 HOURS

We hear a BURST OF STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
Special Operations Log. Minkowski commanding. **FINAL DAY.** The gloves come off. Eliminated two tentacles, five spikes, and six leaf clusters. The bastard's range of movement is way more limited, it has to be. Now it's just a question of finding its hideout and destroying every single trace of -

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
(over comm)
Um, Minkowski? Why is the armory wide open, and also, apparently, *robbed*? Where's the tactical knives kit?

MINKOWSKI
Don't worry. I've got that.

EIFFEL
Oh. And the M4 carbine? The, like, really-dangerous-in-space, select-fire M4 carbine?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I've got that too.

EIFFEL
And this empty rack I'm looking at right now with a label that says "harpoon" suggests that...

MINKOWSKI
Yes. I have it, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Alright, that's it. Everyone's entitled to a Howard Beale breakdown, but *I* can't take it anymore! Did Hilbert spike your rations with, like, wild boar DNA to make you this stubborn?! Why's this disaster-in-progress so important to you?!

MINKOWSKI
Because, Eiffel! Because as laughable as the universe seems to find it, I am in charge of this disaster.

EIFFEL
You sure have been acting like it.

MINKOWSKI
It's great that you can blow me off and take crazy killer plants for granted, but I can't. I have to take it seriously! If I can eliminate one threat, just one, then we are that much closer to

going *home*. Okay?! So no whining, no more flip little references! I am going in there, and I am going to *get* this thing!

EIFFEL
(weary, resigned)
Of course you are...
(beat)
Look, I'm gonna finish fixing the sensory array. I would love to have your help with that, but I'll settle for having you nap while I do that, because when is the last time you slept? Can you at least do that?

Minkowski sees his point. But what's that thing about objects in motion...

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I...I'll check in once I've neutralized the threat. Okay?

Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
Good luck.

BUZZER. He's out. Minkowski CLIMBS INTO the vent system.

Section 7

MINKOWSKI
(muttering to herself)
It's not like... This isn't exactly a leisure activity... Somebody has to control...

Steam let off, she CLEARS HER THROAT.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, only two zones left to search. I think I'm gonna -

Something around her CRUNCHES. She stops.

MINKOWSKI
Huh. There's too much rust on that panel, even for a recycled part. I wonder if it's even still in place.

She pushes on it and the panel GROANS and GIVES WAY.

MINKOWSKI
Woah.

Minkowski CLIMBS inside.

MINKOWSKI
(it's christmas)
I found it. I found its lair. That it built itself, apparently - there's no way even Command would screw with station layout this much. Look at this moss...It's holding the panels together, and, wow, it looks like it's bent some metal to hold these...

BOP. Something bumps into her helmet from the side.

MINKOWSKI
Well, I found the screwdriver. But what on Earth did it want with a -

And then she sees the answer and stops cold. She's looking at a small thing by her feet. We hear her reaching down and touching something. We hear her HITTING A SWITCH, followed by unmistakable sounds of a LAMP TURNING ON AND FLICKERING.

MINKOWSKI
It's a... Lamp. It built - it built itself a night light out of old scraps of metal and wire. I guess it...it just didn't want to be in the dark.

Suddenly we hear the tell-tale METALLIC THUMPS of the Plant Monster. Minkowski DRAWS the harpoon and takes aim.

MINKOWSKI
Doesn't matter. This is the mission. This is what we have to do.

METAL CREAAKING. It's definitely heading this way.

MINKOWSKI
(getting psyched up)
You wanna play with me, huh? You wanna run rings around me? The joyless, boring, predictable old Minkowski? She can't stop *you*, right? Not someone as smart and powerful as you. You've got her pegged. Good. Get complacent. Get smug. That's right when you'll

find me waiting for you. With a goddamm *harpoon*.

The Plant Monster GROWLS. Low. Threatening. It's right on the other side of the wall.

MINKOWSKI
Don't hesitate. Don't hesitate. Don't.

It's right around the corner when -

BUZZER.

HERA
Umm... I'm sorry to interrupt, but... Officer Eiffel has kind of gotten stuck in one of the traps you set up? Again. And he's saying - well, shouting really - that there's this ominous ticking sound? My scans suggest he has about three minutes before he's doused with a vat of acid.
(beat)
We need you for this, Commander.

A BEAT. Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Tell Eiffel I'm on my way.

She holsters the harpoon and turns towards the Plant Monster.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, here's the deal: I'm talking to *you* now. You understand me?

From the other side of the wall, there's a distinct HISS.

MINKOWSKI
All right. If you all you want is to be left alone and not in darkness, then, fine. Just... keep to yourself. But if you even photosynthesize on any of my people, you and I will go right back to dancing. Agreed?

HISS.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Great. We're done.

Minkowski CLIMBS OUT of the Plant Monster's lair, and back into the station.

FADE TO:

Section 8

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1000 HOURS

The door OPENS and Eiffel walks in.

EIFFEL
Oh, sorry. Didn't know you were in here.

MINKOWSKI
No, just finishing up. Comms Room's all yours.

EIFFEL
How're you doing? Feeling better?

MINKOWSKI
Yes. I think sleeping for sixteen hours will do that.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Especially if someone mixed a couple sedatives in your tea.
(to Minkowski)
Um, listen, I really want to apologize. I -

MINKOWSKI
You have nothing to apologize for. I went a little insane. I lost perspective, and I put the crew in danger. I promise you I'm not gonna make that mistake again.

EIFFEL
Great. You have no idea, I mean, it's dire when I'm the responsible one around here.
(dare I ask?)
Which, speaking, of what's on the agenda for today? Because I have all of these really *sane* tasks to do, if someone happens to be taking a break from -

MINKOWSKI
I'm done hunting the Plant Monster, Eiffel, if that's what

you're pussyfooting around. We... Reached an understanding, I guess you could call it.

EIFFEL
It's not going to strangle us in our sleep, then?

MINKOWSKI
Looking back over the past two weeks, it had plenty of opportunities to kill me. I'm still here. I don't think the Plant Monster wants us dead. At least... Not anymore.

EIFFEL
So what does it want?

MINKOWSKI
Pretty much the same thing we do, I think. To survive. To make it somewhere. To not be in the dark.
(beat)
Anyway, do you still want to fix the sensory array?

EIFFEL
Already finished it, actually.

MINKOWSKI
Wow. Communications Officer Eiffel, doing routine maintenance.

EIFFEL
It's been a weird week. And I want to keep working on the routers. See if it helps Hera any.

MINKOWSKI
Good idea. We should get right on that.

EIFFEL
"We?"

MINKOWSKI
It's really more of a two person job, isn't it?

Eiffel smiles.

EIFFEL
Sounds great, <u>Commander</u>.

And off that, the theme music comes in and we FADE OU -

LOUD ALARM, one we're never heard before, GOES OFF.

EIFFEL
What the..? What's that alarm for?

HERA
Commander Minkowski? I'm... I'm picking up a proximity alert.

EIFFEL
A *what* now?

HERA
There appears to be a small spacecraft approaching the Hephaestus. Three hundred kilometers out and closing.

Eiffel looks to Minkowski, wide-eyed. She snaps into steely business-mode.

MINKOWSKI
Is it close enough to do a sensor scan? Are you picking up any recognition codes?

HERA
Uhhh... Negative, no recognition codes.

MINKOWSKI
What about life signs? Is there anyone on board that thing?

HERA
I'm detecting one life form on board.

MINKOWSKI
Let's see if they're feeling friendly. Eiffel, open up a Comms channel, ship to ship.

EIFFEL
Aye aye, sir.

We hear him PUNCHING IN COMMANDS on his console.

HERA
Opening communications... now.

BEEP.

MINKOWSKI
Attention. Unknown spacecraft: this is the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Please identify yourself.

We hear a BURST OF STATIC as the Comms Channel connects.

VOICE
(over comm)
What? *Who* am I speaking to?

MINKOWSKI
You are talking to the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Hephaestus. Now, I say again: please identify yourself.

A BEAT TICKS BY. Then another. Finally -

VOICE
No. No, *this* is the commander of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station.

At that moment, Eiffel and Minkowski recognize the voice. They stare at each other, dumbfounded, as they realize they are speaking with -

LOVELACE
This is Captain Isabel Lovelace, U.S. Air Force, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Hephaestus. So who the hell are you?

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 21.

WOLF 359

"MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on Day 645 of the Hephaestus Mission)

START EPISODE 22

BEGIN RECORDING:

No credit music. Instead we go right into:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 1015 HOURS

WAAA! WAAA! WAAA! A DEAFENING ALARM BLARES through the station's loudspeakers. Somewhere, beyond the walls around us, we hear METAL CREAKING and CLANGING. AIR POPS and HISSES begin just a second later.

It's the sound of two spacecrafts coming together.

HERA
Ship docking complete, Commander. Beginning pressure exchange. Thirty seconds.

We hear Minkowski's GUN COCKING.

MINKOWSKI
Alright, Eiffel, get in position. Don't go weapons free unless I tell you, but be ready for anything. If a... tap-dancing dinosaur steps out of that pod, I don't want to hear you so much as blink.

EIFFEL
I'll set the Barney sensors to maximum prejudice, sir.

MINKOWSKI
This is a crisis situation, so you're going to take this as seriously as you can.

EIFFEL
Uhhh quick Q? Why are we gearing up like we're about to hit the OK Corral? If that really is Captain Lovelace, shouldn't we be getting ready to break bread with the space cavalry?

We hear MECHANICAL WHIRRING as the MAIN AIRLOCK DOOR begins to OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
That's an enormous "if." And we're not taking any risks, at least not until WHOA WHOA. Stop right there.

Halfway through that last sentence we hear a WEAPON BEING RAISED as Captain Lovelace enters the hangar bay through the airlock. At once Minkowski's gun is also primed.

EIFFEL
Uh-

LOVELACE
Back away! Back away right now!

MINKOWSKI
Uh-uh. Not until you lower that gun. Drop it now.

LOVELACE
Back away and let me through.

MINKOWSKI
Not how it works. Nobody comes into my station pointing a gun at my crew. So hand it over or turn the hell around.

LOVELACE
I'm not just surrendering to any -

EIFFEL
Hey, hey, easy... Let's all count to ten before anybody starts asking if anybody else is feeling lucky, okay?

LOVELACE
Who the hell are you?

EIFFEL
Doug Eiffel, Comms Officer, big fan. **LET'S. TALK.**

For a BEAT the two women keep their guns trained on each other.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
<u>Sirs</u>, please. We're all friendlies here, so let's just -

LOVELACE
What happened when the blue ship and the red ship collided?

EIFFEL
Uhh... Gesundheit?

LOVELACE
(pointed)
Blue ship. Red ship. Collided. What happened?

EIFFEL
I'm really not sure what -

MINKOWSKI
Both crews were marooned.

Eiffel and Lovelace's attentions snap back to Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
He's not Command-level, he never got the authentication codes. Confirmation: Victor-Uniform-Lima-

MINKOWSKI
-Charlie-Alpha-November.

LOVELACE
-Charlie-Alpha-November.

This hangs for a moment. Then -

LOVELACE
It really is the Hephaestus?

MINKOWSKI
It is. I'm Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski. Your... Successor.

LOVELACE
H-how?

EIFFEL
That's a really interesting story, which we can totally get into, riiight after a tiny bit of disarmament.

LOVELACE
Take it. <u>How</u>?

Her tone is quickly venturing into the lands of panicked mania, even as she throws her gun at Eiffel.

EIFFEL
There we go. Isn't that much - wait. The clip is empty. What's the point of carrying an empty gun?

But Lovelace isn't listening to him anymore.

LOVELACE
HOW?! How did you bring me back here? WHY did you bring me back here?!?

And as that rings out, we go into our -

OPENING THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER
Welcome to Wolf 359.

As the music continues we settle into a different scene, now in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1130 HOURS

We come in at the tail end of the crew (plus Captain Lovelace) listening to a familiar recording:

LOVELACE
(on audio recording)
... you will feel more helpless and more alone than all the innocent people you've ever hurt. See you soon.

And it falls back into STATIC. They listen for a moment, then Eiffel TURNS OFF the recording.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
You actually found these.

EIFFEL
A bit too late. We still got to find out about Command's turn to the Dark Side the hard way.

LOVELACE
But that's all you heard?

EIFFEL
Just those six logs, plus the SOS you hardwired into the aux system.

MINKOWSKI
So... If you'll forgive the bluntness, Captain, I think we need to know: what happened after that last recording?

There's a BEAT as Lovelace collects herself. She SIGHS. Where to even start?

LOVELACE
I suppose you've gathered the basics. My team had been constructing a vessel to get off this station and return to Earth.

MINKOWSKI
How?

LOVELACE
Trial and error. We cannibalized the station's infrastructure. For the first hundred days it seemed completely impossible. Then... It seemed mostly impossible. The main problem was always power, we didn't have anything strong enough to get us out of the star system. But Fourier - one of our astrophysicists - finally cracked it. She figured out how to rewire the core from one of the station's VX3's into the ship.

MINKOWSKI
She <u>what</u>?

EIFFEL
I'm gathering that's impressive?

MINKOWSKI
She... Rewired one of the nuclear reactors from the ship's number one engine. That's...

EIFFEL
Playing with atomic dynamite?

LOVELACE
Nobody said deep space travel would be safe. But... She got it to work. And twelve hours later, she vanished.
(beat)
One of the members of my team - our medical officer, Dr. Selberg - was secretly working against us, picking off my crew.

EIFFEL
How did you find out it was him?

LOVELACE
Luck. Process of elimination. Desperation. He... got sloppier at the end. Fourier disappeared the day after she got the engine to work, and then our A.I. lost power right when we were going to start our final system calibrations. It felt like someone didn't want us leaving the station. I wish I could say that I started thinking straight when he and I were the only ones left, but... I was so paranoid by that point that I think I would have turned on anyone who was with me.

MINKOWSKI
You attacked him?

LOVELACE
Best defense. I figured it was just a matter of time before he tried to kill me. So I incapacitated him and I ran. I got on the ship we'd constructed and left him behind.
(beat)
Not my proudest moment.

This hangs for a BEAT. And then, the big one:

EIFFEL
So you had a spaceship, and it worked. Why are you back here?

There's a tiny, bitter SNORT of LAUGHTER.

LOVELACE
(you don't get it)
You think I did that on purpose? As soon as I was clear from the station's perimeter I programmed the navigation computer on a course back to Earth. I put myself into cryo sleep, set the system to wake me up when we arrived. And it did exactly that: only when I came out of cryo I wasn't back in the Solar System. I was back here. Back with the engine's going critical and just enough power to limp into your docking bay.

EIFFEL
Why would your ship pull a u-turn like that?

LOVELACE
I was hoping you two might be able to shine some light on that.

Eiffel and Minkowski exchange glances. Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Captain we... We had no idea you were even out there.

EIFFEL
And even then - I mean... Overriding a ship's navigation mid-travel? We don't have the hardware for that kind of party trick.

LOVELACE
Then what the hell happened to me?

This is getting more forceful. Eiffel and Minkowski exchange another look: Do **you** have a good explanation?

EIFFEL
Well... Maybe you *did* make it back to Earth, but Command intercepted the vessel before life support woke you up. Sending you back *does* sound like Cutter's idea of a joke...

MINKOWSKI
Or maybe your ship was sabotaged. Someone placed a program in the computer to make sure you ended up back here?

LOVELACE
Maybe's aren't going to cut it here - I need answers.

EIFFEL
This *is* still the Hephaestus, so those are kind of in short supply. But let us see what we can do. Hera? Can you interface with the ship's nav computer?

HERA
It'll take some time for my system to synch with the directory, but I should be able to access the navigation log.

EIFFEL
Get that conversation started, let's see if we can figure out where the good captain's Wonkavator got turned around.

HERA
Roger that.

LOVELACE
Hera?

MINKOWSKI
Sensus Unit, 200 series. She's the Hephaestus Mother Program.

LOVELACE
We had a mother program.

EIFFEL
Rhea. She was a technological predecessor of Hera's.

LOVELACE
She was a *friend*.

Eiffel winces. This is not going super well.

MINKOWSKI
We'll help you figure this out, but... We're going to need a bit of time.

BEAT. Then, Lovelace EXHALES.

LOVELACE
All right. So... What happened to you? What do you mean that you found out about Command "the hard way"?

MINKOWSKI
Before we go over that, Captain... There's something you should see.

Off of that, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - OBSERVATION DECK - 1200 HOURS

The DOOR OPENS as Minkowski enters the room. A moment later, we hear it SHUT behind her.

HILBERT
Ahhh, Minkowski. How may I be of assistance today? Are you still trying to eliminate Specimen 34?

MINKOWSKI
I'm here to give you one last chance.

HILBERT
Oh? At what?

MINKOWSKI
What happened to Captain Lovelace? How did the first Hephaestus Mission end?

Hilbert GROANS.

HILBERT
We have been over this. **Many** times.

MINKOWSKI
And we're gonna go over it one more time. What happened to -

HILBERT
Is this some obscure interrogation technique?
(slow, as if to a toddler)
Her ship malfunctioned and she fell into the star.

MINKOWSKI
Final answer?

HILBERT
Yes! For last time: Captain Lovelace is -

The DOOR OPENS. Hilbert freezes.

LOVELACE
I'm sorry, Dr. Selberg - what were you just *lying*?

HILBERT
No.

It's a small, tiny word. And it's unlike anything we've ever heard Hilbert say. For the first time in the series, his voice is something other than calculated logic. There's not an ounce of chess in there.

Only terror.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
You. No, no, not you. You can't be here. You can't be here!

LOVELACE
I beg to differ.

HILBERT
No, this is...
(to Minkowski)
You did this! You and Eiffel. This is some... Some kind of a trick! Some sort of - GAH!

His sentence ends in a CHOKED GASP as a hand CLAMPS AROUND HIS THROAT like a VICE.

LOVELACE
How about now? You still think this is a trick? Is this hand on your throat just a trick?

HILBERT
(choking)
Please... Can't... Breathe...

Hilbert periodically makes GASPING and CHOKING sounds over the following:

LOVELACE
(slow, pointed)
Then. Stop. Wasting. Your breath.

HILBERT
Please... Commander... She's... Killing me...

MINKOWSKI
You're only good to me as a source of information, and, uh, if you're just going to lie...

Minkowski's tone betrays the fact that something is going not according to plan here.

HILBERT
No... No, not lied... Never said...
They... They said she...

LOVELACE
"They." Oh, that's interesting.

HILBERT
Please... I -

BANG! Hilbert's head has just been slammed against the wall.

LOVELACE
Don't interrupt. We're about to dazzle you with our tiny little soldiers' brains.

MINKOWSKI
(low, to Lovelace)
Whoa, easy, we don't -

LOVELACE
(powering through)
We have this theory: you never even saw what happened to my ship. You got knocked unconscious in engineering, and when you woke up I was gone. Then you called Command, and <u>they</u> were the ones that pieced it all together. <u>They</u> were the ones that told you my ship had crashed. And you never questioned it, because the thought never even crossed your big, genius brain that Command might not be telling you the truth. That they might be playing you, the way they play <u>all</u> of us.

HILBERT
No... They would... Never...

He begins GAGGING.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, that's enough!
(beat)
<u>Lovelace</u>! <u>Drop him</u>!

Lovelace drops Hilbert. He takes an ENORMOUS BREATH and goes into a COUGHING FIT.

LOVELACE
Well, when you come up with a better theory, you let us know. In the mean time... Just something for you to think about. Think about it long and hard.

And with that they turn to exit. The DOOR OPENS.

HILBERT
(coughing, weak)
Wait... Wait... Please.

SLAM. The door shuts. For a few moments, we hear Hilbert's tiny, scared breath.

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1600 HOURS

Eiffel waits in the Bridge as Minkowski enters, shutting the door behind her.

EIFFEL
How's our houseguest?

MINKOWSKI
Fine. I've given her Hilbert's old quarters. Hera, can we institute radio silence for the next ten minutes?

There's a CHIRP from the loudspeakers as the Comms System goes offline.

HERA
Done. You may talk freely.

EIFFEL
How did the interrogation go?

MINKOWSKI
She... Went a little more bad cop than I expected. But it's really her. Hilbert ID'ed her as the real Lovelace.

HERA
He's sure?

MINKOWSKI
More than sure. I'd... Never seen him like that. He was terrified.

EIFFEL
Uhh, yeah, he's not the only one. Back up a sec: so it <u>really</u> is Lovelace? <u>The</u> Captain Lovelace?

MINKOWSKI
It... Looks that way. Unless either one of you has a good alternate explanation?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Maybe she's some kind of like... Clone thing?
(snaps fingers)
Or a really good robot replica! Do we have a Voight-Kampff kit somewhere on board?

MINKOWSKI
No, because those only exist in **science fiction movies.** Be sensible.

EIFFEL
Oh yeah, 'cause here on the Hephaestus we only deal with **sensible** things, like mutant plant monsters and genetically engineered death viruses.

HERA
Is everything a joke to you?

EIFFEL
Only things that are ridiculous, which lately, yeah, pretty much everything.

MINKOWSKI
Simmer down. Look: I'm thrilled to have someone on board that can put the fear of God into Hilbert, but...

HERA
But that doesn't mean there isn't something very wrong with this situation.

EIFFEL
Like what?

HERA
Like the navigation computer on Captain Lovelace's ship. There's nothing on there. No logs, no records, nothing before 0600 hours today, when life support took her out of cryo. It's like...
(how do I put this?)
Like the computer had never been turned on before this morning.

EIFFEL
Aaaand we just crossed over into the twilight zone.

MINKOWSKI
That's what I'm getting at. Occam's Razor. What's the more plausible explanation? Captain Lovelace built a ship out of old bits of spacestation, managed to fly out of the system, vanished for three years, and then magically turned up in the place she started out from? Or there's something else going on here, some deranged long con that Command is playing on all of us? Including Hilbert?

HERA
I'm inclined towards the latter.

MINKOWSKI
So am I.

Eiffel lets out a SIGH.

EIFFEL
I'm... I'm not saying that there's nothing rotten in the state of Denmark. **But...** I know a thing or two about telling lies. And nobody who was telling a lie would go with a story that weird. When something sounds **this** insane, it tends to be the truth.

All three of them consider this for a BEAT. Then, finally -

MINKOWSKI
Well, we can deliberate more thoroughly on that soon, but right now there's something more important we need to deal with.

EIFFEL
What's bigger than the dearly departed Lovelace suddenly pulling up to our little drive-in theater?

MINKOWSKI
How she got here. We now have a spaceship parked on our doorstep. For the first time in almost two years, we're not *completely* stranded. We may have a way home, one that doesn't involve Command.

EIFFEL
You really think that tin can can make it back to Earth?

MINKOWSKI
It was able to dock without anything falling off it. It might be within our power to repair it. Hera, what do you think?

HERA
Umm... I'm not really sure, Commander. The... Err, structural integrity is difficult to evaluate without, some time to...

Something in that last thought really messed with Hera. She glitches **a lot.**

MINKOWSKI
Well, let me help you do a systems check on the thing. If it can be made seaworthy, then that really is our first priority.

HERA
Y-yes s-sir.

Again, something about these thoughts is affecting Hera in a bad way. Not that Minkowski notices - she's starting to head out the door.

EIFFEL
Commander. Hold on.

She pauses, turns back towards Eiffel.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
If we manage to MacGyver that thing enough to achieve lift off...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Exactly **who** is going on this road trip of yours?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Whoever we can trust. Whoever we know is **not** going to kill us halfway through the trip.

EIFFEL
Really not feeling great about stranding someone in deep space just because your spidey sense is tingling. Especially if we're jacking their ride.

MINKOWSKI
I would love to believe everything she's saying, Eiffel. Talk to her, and find me a reason to trust her.

And with that she goes, shutting the door behind her. Damn.

EIFFEL
Aye, aye, sir...

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMS ROOM - 1700 HOURS

There's a BURST OF STATIC. We hear the Comms Room's radio array TUNING. After a moment it dies down.

A moment later we hear a DOOR OPEN. Eiffel enters, absorbed in his own thoughts.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Ok, Doug, you just need some time to think about what you're gonna - Ahhh! I mean - Ah! I mean - Ah-ha... I mean... Ah, Captain Lovelace...
(slow, halting recovery)
I was just looking for you.

LOVELACE
Were you now?

EIFFEL
I was... looking for you, but I... didn't expect to find you in here.

LOVELACE
So you were looking where you didn't expect to find me?

EIFFEL
When you say it like that, I'm either an idiot or super zen.

LOVELACE
You've been kind, Officer Eiffel. Let's go with the latter.

EIFFEL
Thanks. And uh, there's some tea - well, really some seaweed bits in lukewarm water - in Hilbert's, I mean, in your room if you want.

LOVELACE
Thank you.

Lovelace goes back to what she was doing, which was FIDDLING with the DIALS on the comms console. We hear the frequency ADJUSTED and STATIC.

EIFFEL
Uh, do you know what you're doing?

LOVELACE
Am I tampering with a carefully arranged system?

Lovelace GRINS. At last. A sign of the person in there.

EIFFEL
Compromising critical work. I might have to jiggle some dials back and forth. Maybe even adjust the volume. It's not a big deal or anything, but -

LOVELACE
But I'm in your territory.

EIFFEL
Well, I guess it's still technically your territory. Ranking Captain and all that. Mi sucky-ass casa es su sucky-ass casa.

LOVELACE
I actually wanted to investigate those alien transmissions Commander Minkowski mentioned.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
We were pretty much on radio silence for the entire mission.

EIFFEL
Oh. Well, it's not quite as simple as just turning on the receiver and button-mashing. It's actually pretty tricky to find the right frequency and isolate the -

Suddenly, all at once, the static goes away, revealing the opening bars of Franz Schubert's SYMPHONY NO. 9.

LOVELACE
You were saying?

EIFFEL
Oh. Well, my job gets more and more pointful with each passing day...

LOVELACE
So this is it?

EIFFEL
This is it. The Dorado Constellation Mystery Symphony, in all it's glory.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
It's strange. I thought there'd be more to it. Something...special. Alien.
(Beat)
It's just music.

EIFFEL
Just good ol' radiated electromagnetic waves traveling at the speed of light.

They listen for another BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, it seems like you deal pretty well with strange.

LOVELACE
Ha. I'm glad it looks that way.

Suddenly, the MUSIC CUTS OFF. Eiffel tinkers with the control for a moment, then SHUTS THE SYSTEM OFF.

EIFFEL
(a la Porky Pig)
Th-th-th-that's all folks. Thus concludes tonight's performance. There will be no encores.

There's a LOW GROANING that comes through the AIR VENT. Lovelace looks up, slightly alarmed.

LOVELACE
What was that?

EIFFEL
Eh, probably just Hera adjusting the A/C. Either that or the the Plant Monster's on the move.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
The **what**?

EIFFEL
Ahh. Nobody's told you about the Plant Monster yet? So, funny story...

FADE TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SPACESHIP - 1730 HOURS

Minkowski is at the ship's command column, tinkering with the console. She hits a FEW KEYS.

MINKOWSKI
All right, Hera. You should be able to manage all of the ship's systems now.

HERA
Thank you, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
How's the structural scan looking?

HERA
The ship *is* mostly made out of material components that could be extracted from the Hephaestus structure. However, there are multiple elements that I can't trace back to any of the blueprints.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
I guess it's possible that Goddard Futuristics updated the station design in the time between the mission iterations.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, or someone's trying to pull our leg. I'm gonna go to the back and examine the engine.

We hear Minkowski moving through the ship and opening and closing various panels.

HERA
Be careful, I'm picking up radiological signatures.

MINKOWSKI
That'd be the VX3 core they took from the number one engine. I can't believe they found a way to stabilize it.

HERA
I'm... I'm not sure they did, strictly speaking. The power levels have been fluctuating wildly ever since the ship came into my sense horizon. On top of that, there are multiple physical instabilities, mechanical faults, improperly shielded -

MINKOWSKI
Hera, bottom line. Can this thing be made safe? Will it fly?

BEAT.

HERA
It's scrap metal that's been taped together around a nuclear reactor. I'm not sure what's keeping it together right now, and it's **parked.** Forget about moving at a sub-light arc.

MINKOWSKI
And you would recommend?

BEAT.

HERA
Decoupling it from the Hephaestus, and letting it collide with the star. And doing so before it gives you all radiation poisoning or reacts violently.

Minkowski SIGHS. This is not what she wants to hear.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, this might be a chance for us to get home. It might be the last one we ever get.

HERA
(bit too emphatic)
It's an atomic hazard. The only thing that spaceship is going to do is blow up and kill us all.

MINKOWSKI
Maybe, but it's too rare an opportunity to pass up. I'm not going to make any rash decisions.

HERA
Keeping it attached to the station **is** the rash decision.

BEAT. Minkowski stops tinkering with the engine.

MINKOWSKI
Hera. What's wrong?

HERA
Nothing. Sir.

There's another BEAT. Minkowski takes in her tone. Gets it.

MINKOWSKI
If we left on this spaceship... You wouldn't be able to come with us... Would you?

HERA
I don't know. Probably not.
(then)
No. None of the memory banks on that ship are powerful enough to contain my consciousness. And the ship's cabin doesn't have the dimensions to store my central processing unit, or the facilities I'd need to partition my - just...
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Just no. If you went back to Earth on that ship, I'd have to stay behind.

MINKOWSKI
(genuine)
I'm sorry, Hera. I don't know what to say. But -

HERA
But you guys can't pass up a chance to get out of here. I know. I wouldn't ask you to.
(then)
I do still mean it, though. I don't think that ship is salvageable.

MINKOWSKI
Well, if this craft is too far gone, then -

On that "then" Minkowski opened a LARGE PANEL that leads to the heart of the ship's engineering. Instantly, she freezes. BEAT. BEAT. Finally, she SWALLOWS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera? Am I... Am I looking at what I **think** I'm looking at?

HERA
Umm... One second, adjusting my infrared scans to get a better -
(shit)
Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Hera. Get a bead on Eiffel's location. If he's alone, get him to the bridge. Otherwise just... Just find him. Now.

HERA
Yes, sir.

Off of that comforting note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Lovelace and Eiffel are still together. We come in mid-story, and mid-burst of LAUGHTER. They deliver the following through periodic GUFFAWS.

LOVELACE
Empty Man? What's an "Empty" Man?

EIFFEL
Who knows! But that's the point, we have no clue! We're just sitting here with this countdown!

LOVELACE
Right! And when it gets to zero -

EIFFEL
We're all going to get eaten!

More LAUGHTER.

LOVELACE
Oh God, that's mental.

EIFFEL
Heh, yeah. Well, that's Command for you. Always good for a nervous breakdown.

After a few BEATS, they catch their breath and settle. Both of them needed that. A weight's been lifted off both of them.

But then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Did you mean what you said in that last log? When you get back to Earth, are you really gonna go all Edmond Dantes on Cutter and the rest of Command?

LOVELACE
Them, Selberg, and everyone else that had a hand in this freak show. They took a lot of important people away from me.

That gives him pause. How to approach this?

EIFFEL
Captain... I'm -

A DOOR OPENS behind Eiffel. He turns to see Minkowski entering.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey Commander WHOA what's going on?!

Halfway through that sentence, we hear Minkowski COCKING her already drawn GUN.

MINKOWSKI
(to Lovelace)
Don't move. Keep your hands where I can see them. Eiffel, get away from her.

EIFFEL
Easy, easy. Let's take a deep breath.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, she's dangerous. Get behind me right the hell now.

EIFFEL
No, use your words. *Why* are you going full metal jacket? What's happened?

LOVELACE
Do what she says, Officer Eiffel.

Eiffel slowly turns around to face the Captain. Minkowski and Lovelace don't look away from each other.

MINKOWSKI
Captain Lovelace... In my capacity as commanding officer of this station, I am placing you under arrest.

LOVELACE
On what grounds?

MINKOWSKI
Don't. Don't feign innocence with me.

LOVELACE
Have you made up your mind on whether you're going to leave me behind when you steal my ship, Commander?

BEAT. Eiffel's eyes dart between the two women.

EIFFEL
(desperate diplomate)
Hey - hey, what? What is - what's going on with that... Crazy talk that's... Stop with the crazy.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Nobody's getting left behind, right Commander?

LOVELACE
You sure about that, Officer? What if I'm a clone? Or a robot?

BOOM. A wave of shock flows through both Commander and Communications Officer. There's silence before Eiffel gathers up the courage to speak again.

EIFFEL
(forced calm)
H-How did... You couldn't have heard that. The comms were off.

LOVELACE
Tiny recorder and transmitter, attached to the magazine release, set to broadcast directly to a battery-operated radio receiver. That, Officer Eiffel, is the point of carrying an empty gun.
(to Minkowski)
You're gonna have to do better if you want to leave me out of the loop. I **invented** being paranoid on this station.

EIFFEL
Okay, fine. We did a bad thing. We should have invited you to sit at the big kids table. But as far as we knew, you were dead, and we were kind of freaking out, okay? But nothing has happened! So let's **put down our guns** and talk this through.

MINKOWSKI
She has a gun pointed at all of our heads. There's an explosive device wired into the core of her ship's engine. If she pulls that trigger the Hephaestus will get blown into cosmic dust.

LOVELACE
Did you really think I'd come back into my station without the means to defend myself?

MINKOWSKI
Well, that's all over now. Hera's working to jam all transmissions between the station and your ship, and as soon as that's done you're going to luxuriate in one of the cells on <u>your</u> station while we disarm that monstrosity.

LOVELACE
And if you want to live, you'll tell your AI to stop jamming. Now.

MINKOWSKI
Why?

LOVELACE
Because of this.

Lovelace pulls up her sleeve, to reveal a small DEVICE strapped to her upper arm. Now that it's uncovered, we hear it BEEPING SOFTLY.

EIFFEL
What's that?

LOVELACE
Insurance. Dead man's switch connected to a heart rate monitor. It constantly broadcasts a signal to the bomb on my ship's engine. If that signal stops, it will detonate. If my heart stops, it will detonate. My heart speeds up too much? Ka. Boom. So unless you want to put us all out of our misery in the next thirty seconds, you're going to stop trying to be clever and put your gun down.

There's a BEAT as the standoff continues. Then Minkowski doubles down.

MINKOWSKI
(gritted teeth)
No. You'd be killing yourself. I don't buy it.

LOVELACE
Then you've never been as scared as I have.

BEAT. The sensor on Lovelace's arm BEEPS softly.

EIFFEL
And what are you planning to do with all this... Mutually assured destruction?

LOVELACE
Do? Officer Eiffel, I am going to do exactly what you wanted me to: I am going to prove that I am the real Captain Lovelace, and that I am not working for Command. But I'm done waiting for you to make up your mind and trust me - we're gonna be doing things a little differently now. There's a new sheriff in town, and I am not taking suggestions, complaints, or objections. **Here's what's going to happen:**

You are going to help me restore my ship's flight capabilities. We are going to do whatever it takes to make that happen. When it's ready, we are **all** getting off this station, and going back to Earth.

Oh, and one more thing: as we go, we're going to set off explosive charges and blow this station to Kingdom Come. We're going to make sure that that no one sets foot on this station ever again.

Anything else happen and we all -

MINKOWSKI
(low and deadly)
I think that you're done threatening us.

LOVELACE
And I am not in a place where I care about what you think, Commander. But one way or another? Whatever game Command is playing with this station is <u>over</u>. Welcome to my Cold War, kids. Fasten your seat belts, stay out of the way and <u>don't try me</u>.

Any questions?

And then -

SILENCE.

END OF EPISODE 22.

WOLF 359

"NO PRESSURE"

by

Sarah Shachat

WRITER'S NOTE: the following takes place on Day 655 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 23.

INT. LOVELACE'S SHIP - MAIN CABIN - 1600 HOURS

Eiffel, Lovelace, and Minkowski (in spacesuits) are gathered around the ship's controls. The ship periodically GROANS and SHUDDERS.

LOVELACE
Let's run it again.

EIFFEL
Shouldn't we take five, Captain? I think the Good Ship Lollipop could use a bit of downtime.

MINKOWSKI
We all could. The heat and air -

LOVELACE
- will replenish themselves as soon as we're able to boot up life support. So let's run it again.

They all sound pretty exhausted. Eiffel and Minkowski SIGH.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
That's the spirit. Eiffel?

Eiffel TYPES some stuff on his console and FLIPS SWITCHES.

EIFFEL
Right-o.
(clears this throat, hits a button to give himself a PA chime)
Good evening, ladies and... ladies. This is Communications Officer Eiffel. We're delighted to have you on board this Ford Pinto-class shuttle service for our, uh,
(papers rustle)
48th start-up sequence attempt.

LOVELACE
Is there a way to stop him doing this?

MINKOWSKI
There's no off-switch. I've checked.

EIFFEL
(louder)
As you can see, the Captain has turned on the fasten seatbelt sign, so please fold up your dining trays, extinguish all your contraband smoking material, and, if you go in for that sort of thing, pray this rust bucket doesn't blow us all up.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
You good?

EIFFEL
Yep. 12-step program, take 48.
(to Lovelace)
Call it, Captain.

LOVELACE
Engage aux power unit.

There's a CRANK followed by a DING!

MINKOWSKI
Auxiliary power unit engaged.

LOVELACE
Set hard primer to number one position.

The ship GROANS in protest as Eiffel TURNS A DIAL. But we hear the same DING! of success.

EIFFEL
Primer Set. Engine's responsive.

MINKOWSKI
(muttering)
Hopefully not too responsive.

LOVELACE
Close power bus breakers.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. DING!

EIFFEL
Breakers are closed.

LOVELACE
Priming fuel mixers.

TYPE. A METALLIC BANG as the ship struggles to get its systems working. But... DING!

MINKOWSKI
Fuel mixers primed. A little below optimal levels, but still green.

LOVELACE
Excellent. Okay. Here's the fun one: main thruster ignition.

More BANGS and GROANS as Lovelace basically turns on the rocket part of the rocket.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
C'mon...

Suddenly, there's a jet-like ROAR. The engine noise TAPERS OFF into a low THRUM. Just above that, we hear the DING!

EIFFEL
Phew.

LOVELACE
Great.

MINKOWSKI
(sarcastic)
Yeah. Great.

LOVELACE
I'm glad you're so enthusiastic, Commander. Let's engage the avionics system.

MINKOWSKI
You think the engine's stable enough for that?

EIFFEL
The power and the support systems on this boat <u>do</u> kinda have a rocky relationship...

LOVELACE
Avionics, Minkowski.

Minkowski FLIPS SWITCHES and we hear START UP NOISES. The ship SHAKES and there's ELECTRICAL FEEDBACK. Then, after a tense moment - DING!

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Avionics system engaged.

The energy in the room GETS TENSE. This is as far as the team's gotten in repairing the ship. Past the next step, they will have made real progress.

LOVELACE
Confirm?

TYPE, TYPE, TYPE.

MINKOWSKI
Yes. It's up.
(lower)
Barely.

EIFFEL
Now for the $64,000 question...

MINKOWSKI
You know that even if we get life support up, there's still more to the startup sequence, right?

EIFFEL
Of course, I -

LOVELACE
One insurmountable step at a time. Eiffel, activate the life support systems.

EIFFEL
Hopefully activating the life support systems, aye.

The BOOT UP of life support and the HISS of oxygen contends with the GROANS and RUMBLES of the shuttle.

For a tense BEAT, everyone waits.

Then there's a distinct series of noises: the SPARK, SNAP, and BWOOOMP of something shorting out and everything shutting off. Eiffel GROANS.

LOVELACE
Damnit.

MINKOWSKI
Must've overclocked the computer.

LOVELACE
(frustrated)
Life support...

EIFFEL
That teeny little detail.

MINKOWSKI
At least the breakers are holding.

LOVELACE
There's a fix for this. We just have to find it.

EIFFEL
Something to ponder over tea on our nice, warm space station. The one with all the super breathable air? Shall we, ladies?

LOVELACE
Not so fast, Jeeves. We've still got about an hour on our suits, and I have a hunch the main bus inputs might be our culprit.

MINKOWSKI
(clicking on a flashlight)
Even if it is, it looks like the power failure zapped some of these wires. We'll need replacements from the Hephaestus' stores.

LOVELACE
That's fair. Commander, you grab parts and oxygen reserves. Eiffel and I will clean up the wiring as best we can in the meantime.

A BUZZER as Minkowski's Comms connect to the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can you initiate the pressure exchange? I'm going into the docking corridor.

HERA
Roger, Commander. Starting docking procedure now.

Minkowski OPENS the main door, exits, and SHUTS it again.

MINKOWSKI
(over comm)
Door secure. Awaiting pressure exchange.

HERA
Sixty seconds, Commander.

Lovelace examines the panel where Minkowski was working.

LOVELACE
Oh, yeah. All these wires are going to have to come out.

She starts working on them, which results in some ARCING from the the console. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Umm, why don't you let me take care of those?

LOVELACE
Feeling gentlemanly, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Umm, well, in a sense, yes. But in another, more accurate, more cowardly sense, no. I don't want you getting shocked and damaging your mega death switch.

LOVELACE
Oh. Right.

Eiffel gets in and starts UNPLUGGING bad cables.

EIFFEL
You know... you could've given us a chance to come around. We would've. And then the only tension would be the ship blowing up *on accident*.

LOVELACE
I don't have that kind of time.

EIFFEL
What do you -

There's a ZZZZT of electricity inside the console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow!

As Eiffel jumps back from the console, the ship SHUDDERS. A PULSE runs through it. Eiffel and Lovelace hear a set of POPS coming from outside, followed by a violent BANG.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Um, what the -

LOVELACE
Commander! Commander Minkowski, come in!

MINKOWSKI
(over comm)
Owww. Just. Owwwww.

HERA
So... I'm guessing you all noticed the huge electrical surge?

MINKOWSKI
I repeat my last: Oww.

LOVELACE
Gonna need a little bit more detail from you, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
(still oww)
I'm okay. I guess I'm lucky it didn't fry the whole corridor. I'm just... damn, I'm gonna be left-handed for a few days. What happened?

LOVELACE
Circuit fault? Power fluctuation? Not sure yet.

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
Hey, don't look at me. For once, this is outside my jurisdiction. But whatever happened disabled my ability to connect with the Hephaestus' docking mechanism.

EIFFEL
Which means...?

LOVELACE
We can't open the station door.

HERA
Commander Minkowski can do it manually, but only if the pressure's equalized.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
You'll have to manage that on your end. Somehow.

EIFFEL
With what, exactly? My raw animal magnetism?

MINKOWSKI
The life support system. The one we can't get to work.

EIFFEL
Oh.

LOVELACE
The pressure in there isn't enough already?

HERA
Nope.

Eiffel COUGHS.

EIFFEL
Well, let's at least get you back in here, Commander, and out of -

MINKOWSKI
No!

LOVELACE
No!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(backing away)
Or... Let's *not* do that.

LOVELACE
Open the door and the air in here will disperse back through the ship. We'd have to run the life support system for longer.

MINKOWSKI
And right now, we can't run it at all.

EIFFEL
Well, we can't just leave her out there between a space rock and a non-smoking place!

MINKOWSKI
I'll be fine. The important thing is for us to work through it. Did you see whatever you did that caused this mess?

EIFFEL
Hey, what makes you sure it's my fault and not Old Unfaithful here?

MINKOWSKI
You really want me to answer that?

LOVELACE
Commander -

EIFFEL
No, but it'd be nice if you cut me a little slack, since we're basically doing the aeronautical equivalent of herding cats.

LOVELACE
(settle down, kids)
Hey.

MINKOWSKI
I'd be more willing if you hadn't clearly blown off inspecting the wire casings. Or stranded me in an uninsulated metal tube!

EIFFEL
What?! I checked them yesterday!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
No, really, Commander. You think I want to ride the U.S.S. Terrible Idea with all its conductors showing?

LOVELACE
(I will turn this car around!)
HEY!

Silence. Well, almost. They've gotten Lovelace's blood pressure high enough that her deadman's sensor starts BEEPING. It dies down over the following:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
<u>Stop</u>. <u>Talking</u>.
(beat)
The amount of time we have to argue about what happened or whose fault it is, is limited.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Even more limited than that, however, is the amount of time we still have air. So, let's all indulge in one nice, deep, BS-cleansing breath, okay?

BEAT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Now: We will get the life support online and the doors open. Officer Eiffel, you and I will rewire this console, run the system, and equalize the pressure.

Commander Minkowski, you're going to do whatever you can to repair the door mechanism from the inside. And we are going to accomplish our respective tasks in a calm, composed, and levelheaded manner.

Understood?

Well. They just got told.

FADE TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - MAIN CABIN - 30 MINUTES LATER

TYPE, TYPE, TYPE. DING!

EIFFEL
Avionics system engaged, Captain.

LOVELACE
Great. Just give me one second.

Lovelace turns A MECHANICAL CRANK and then FLIPS SWITCHES.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay. Try now.

EIFFEL
Yes, sir. Going for cabin pressure.
(more to himself)
No pressure. Absolutely none.

We hear LIFE SUPPORT BOOT UP and OXYGEN FLOW. But after only a moment it SPUTTERS OUT.

LOVELACE
Goddammit... Shut it down.

Eiffel GROANS and hits the "off" switch. The ship's engine shuts off.

MINKOWSKI
(glum, over comm)
That sounded marginally less catastrophic.

LOVELACE
Yeah. Engine's holding, Commander, but still no dice on the life support. How are you doing?

MINKOWSKI
Not much more I can do on my end.

LOVELACE
And temperature-wise?

MINKOWSKI
(is really quite cold)
It's... bracing.

LOVELACE
Just keep moving. We're gonna get this.

MINKOWSKI
Right.

Lovelace and Eiffel CLICK ON their flashlights. Lovelace moves up to the main flight console.

EIFFEL
So. What next?

Lovelace closes her eyes and thinks for a moment.

LOVELACE
So, a moth walks into a doctor's office -

Minkowski GROANS.

EIFFEL
Spaceship actual, please confirm the moth walks and doesn't fly.

LOVELACE
Noted, Communications. The moth indeed <u>walks</u> into a doctor's office. And he says, "Doc, I feel terrible.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I've been out of work for a year, I'm up to my compound eyes in debt-"

MINKOWSKI
Please make this shorter than the one about the bear.

LOVELACE
"- I feel like my life has been a waste. I don't feel connected to the people I'm supposed to love."

EIFFEL
Very common complaints among the moth population.

LOVELACE
Right, yes. He says, "My daughter's still not talking to me since she shacked up with that high-school dropout, and I can't even transverse orient my son, because -"

MINKOWSKI
How is this in any way useful?

LOVELACE
Because, Commander, if I don't keep my heart rate under control, none of us will be able to do anything useful.

EIFFEL
Or help this poor moth.

LOVELACE
Precisely. Thank for keeping me on task, Communications.

EIFFEL
My pleasure, Actual.

Minkowski GROANS again.

LOVELACE
So the moth says, "I feel like my entire life is nothing more than a fragile web of lies barely holding me back from the howling abyss."

And the doc says, "You do seem to have a lot of problems.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
You need a therapist, a psychiatrist even. But I'm a dermatologist. Why did you come to me?" And..
(trailing)
The moth says...

But Lovelace doesn't land the punchline. She's had an idea.

EIFFEL
Captain? You okay?

LOVELACE
(to herself)
The light was on.

MINKOWSKI
What?

LOVELACE
(now all business)
Hera, if you disable the ship's safeguards, we could run life support directly off the engine, correct? We wouldn't keep tripping the aux power's fuse light?

HERA
(that's a horrible idea)
Correct, Captain, but I don't think the risk involved in -

LOVELACE
Never mind that. Eiffel, standby to run startup sequence. Hera, prepare to disengage security interlocks.

HERA
Captain, the VX3 is too unstable. The danger to the ship's struc-

LOVELACE
We're running out of options, Hera. And air.

EIFFEL
So Hera does a thing and either we get the life support on, or...?

LOVELACE
Or the ship explodes. But I won't let that happen.

EIFFEL
Yeah, but -

LOVELACE
(slow and steady)
But I **won't** let that happen...
okay?

She smiles at him wolfishly. Then back to business:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hera, please disengage security
interlocks now.

Hera SIGHS.

HERA
Five seconds, Captain.
(don't fuck this up)
Good luck.

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... DING! Off goes the safety. The ship immediately starts SHAKING BADLY.

LOVELACE
Let's go! Setting primer.

A DIAL TURNS. DING! From depths of engine comes a RUMBLE.

EIFFEL
Captain...

LOVELACE
Not now, Eiffel. Closing power bus
breakers.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. DING!

EIFFEL
Uh, priming fuel mixers?

TYPEDY-TYPE-TYPE. DING! Followed by a Really Big BANG!

Around this point we begin to hear Lovelace's deadman sensor BEEPING.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Captain, none of these are happy
sounds. Should we be -

LOVELACE
Shut. Up. Initiating main thruster
and engaging avionics.

CRANK! DING! TYPE, TYPE, TYPE! DING! RUMBLE, GROAN, SHAKE, BOOM! It seems like the ship is reaching a crisis point.

EIFFEL
Uh, Captain... The electrical system's going into the red and -

LOVELACE
Eiffel! Life support! *Now!*

EIFFEL
Aaahokay, okay! Engaging it!

We hear LIFE SUPPORT BOOT UP but it SPUTTERS dangerously.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Cooome on... big money, no whammies, no whammies...

LOVELACE
(quiet)
Give it a moment...

VWWWOOOOM, something in the engine GROANS TO LIFE.

EIFFEL
Please don't blow up please don't blow up please don't blow up.

And suddenly... DING! OXYGEN FLOWS.

Lovelace allows herself a moment to let the relief soak in.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Was... Was that it? Did we...?

LOVELACE
Hera, can we confirm that-

HERA
Sensors are detecting an increase in the O2 content of the air *and* pressure. The airlock should open in sixty seconds.

EIFFEL
The hills are alive with the sound of oxygen!

LOVELACE
Excellent.

HERA
As soon as that's done, I recommend you re-engage security interlocks and power down the ship's engine.

LOVELACE
Roger that, Hera. Thank you.

Lovelace turns away from the console to face Eiffel.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Communications... Who's the man?

EIFFEL
(chuckling)
Uh, you are, Actual.

LOVELACE
C'mon. You gotta say the whole thing.

EIFFEL
All right, you're the man, Captain Lovelace.

LOVELACE
I am. Thank you. Okay, Commander.

Lovelace OPENS the door. HEAT and AIR BLAST through the corridor to defrost Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
(still shivering)
Thanks, um, thank you. I guess you were right... The ship really could take it.

LOVELACE
Yep. And now we know that life support will stay on if it gets that extra kick of power.

Minkowski and Eiffel look at each other.

EIFFEL
Yeah. The more you know. Yay us.

LOVELACE
I know we've had a lot of setbacks. I know this isn't ideal by any definition of the word. But we've made it this far. We're going to be okay. I promise.

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

She lets out a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
But for now -

There's a HISS OF AIR as the AIRLOCKS OPENS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
- let's head back and regroup.

LOVELACE
Sounds like a plan.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2100 HOURS

We hear a little RADIO STATIC of Eiffel futzing with comms. The DOOR OPENS and Minkowski enters.

EIFFEL
Hey, Commander. Your arm okay?

MINKOWSKI
Sore. But, I'll be fine. You?

EIFFEL
Still pretty thrilled we got the life support to fire up. And also pretty... not thrilled.

MINKOWSKI
You sure this room's bug-free?

EIFFEL
The Dread Pirate Lovelace is pretty resourceful, I'll admit. But I've got instruments running interference like I'm, uh...
(gradually slowing)
... some sort of... catcher at a... political debate... thing?

MINKOWSKI
Not your best.

EIFFEL
(leave me alone)
It's been a long day.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Hera, you're still with Lovelace on the bridge?

HERA
I'm walking her through the shuttle's wiring configuration. It should take at least half an hour.

MINKOWSKI
We'll keep it short. Life support. That was the big one. As long as that wasn't coming online, we knew we had time. But now... Now we might need to do something drastic if we're going to stop her from blowing up the Hephaestus.

EIFFEL
And Hera!

MINKOWSKI
And Hera.

HERA
She's pretty civil for a murderer, I'll give her that.

EIFFEL
I think I know what we should do.

HERA
Oh?

EIFFEL
Watching her today? She could've opened the rear hatch and stranded you, Commander. She could've tried blowing the airlock. She didn't. Even in a crisis, she didn't cross that line. So that's what we need. A crisis.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we have a crisis. It's a good day when we only have *one* crisis.

EIFFEL
Listen, the only way we know to get rid of Herr Trigger Von Bombenstein is for Lovelace to disarm it herself. Right? So we need to create a situation, a fake emergency, where it seems that's the only viable choice. Where having the bomb around is too much of a risk, even for the conspiracy theorist in chief.

MINKOWSKI
What have you got in mind?

EIFFEL
We keep pretending to help her. But we also start messing with the station to make it seem like something's about to go horribly wrong. Then, when we're ready, we spring our clever trap, and Captain Lovelace makes a command decision to stop being *crazy*.

MINKOWSKI
That sounds... complicated.

EIFFEL
Do *you* have an easy three-step solution?

MINKOWSKI
As a matter of fact.

Minkowski PULLS OUT and TAPS a small silver canister.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hilbert's very own halothane knockout gas. Step 1: We deploy it. Step 2: We disarm the deadman's switch during Lovelace's 20-hour nap. Step 3: We lock her ass up and jettison that bomb into space.

EIFFEL
Commander, if *I* can survive a gas attack, I'm pretty sure Lovelace will find a way to Rambo it back at our sorry asses. Plus, what makes you so sure that you *can* disarm that thing on her arm? What if it's got a password? Or a failsafe?

HERA
He has a surprisingly valid point.

EIFFEL
Thank you?

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you're the one that's going to be the most affected by all of this. What do you think?

BEAT.

HERA
I think it's a bad idea to confront Captain Lovelace head on. There's no margin for error, and no way to know how she'll react. I like Officer Eiffel's idea.

MINKOWSKI
But is it feasible? What kind of emergency could we create?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Uh... a bad one?

MINKOWSKI
It'll have to take her by surprise, whatever it is. But it has to be something concrete. Take away something she relies on, something she would never question. Like air.

HERA
Or intelligence.

EIFFEL
Come again?

HERA
Captain Lovelace has kept both of you on a short leash, but she just thinks of me as a tool. She only gives me the time of day when she needs tech support. And only barely. She wouldn't think I was lying if I told her that, say... a meteor storm was headed directly for the station.

EIFFEL
Hera, you diabolical fox in the machine! Can I vote for this plan?

MINKOWSKI
Hang on. Can you lie about something like that, Hera? Your programming -

HERA
Stops me from directly altering or fabricating information when I address station officers. Believe me, I know. But nothing in my databanks would prevent other crew members from, oh, adjusting my sensory systems, my interior station monitors, and my navigation controls to create a convincing simulation of an oncoming meteor storm.

EIFFEL
Okay, now I double-vote for this plan!

Despite herself, Minkowski's warming up to it, too.

MINKOWSKI
It *is* devious. And, assuming we make all those adjustments without detection, it has a chance. But the second it starts to fail, we go to Plan B.

HERA
What's plan B?

By way of answer, Minkowski TAPS the GAS CANISTER again.

EIFFEL
Great.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, we'll start making the adjustments to your systems. But I'd like you to start calculating release vectors for the halothane if we need it.

HERA
I'll work on that.

MINKOWSKI
Good. Okay. Well, I think we have our mission.

A BEAT as our three contemplate the tasks ahead of them.

EIFFEL
Yeah! It'll be great.
(confidence fading)
This is the play. We're gonna - this is gonna end well.

HERA
Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yes?

HERA
Shut up.

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

Eiffel EXHALES.

EIFFEL
This is gonna end well.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 23.

WOLF 359

"TACTICAL BRAIN DAMAGE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 657 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 22

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0850 HOURS

We hear the CHIME of the P.A. System:

HERA
Good morning, everyone. Crew work assignments for the day are as follows: Officer Eiffel is on shuttle repair detail with Captain Lovelace, and Commander Minkowski will be helping me do a diagnostic of the station's electrical system. Hopefully that'll take care of the power fluctuations which started when a certain... Communications Officer who shall remain nameless decided it would be a good idea to make waffles during a solar flare. A certain lazy, irresponsible, dim-witted, unhygienic -

Eiffel CLEARS HIS THROAT.

HERA (CONT'D)
- Communications Officer who shall remain nameless. Please report to assigned stations by 0900 hours.

The P.A. CHIMES again.

EIFFEL
"Unhygienic?"

HERA
You said be convincing.

MINKOWSKI
God is in the details. Thank you, Hera. Where's Lovelace?

HERA
Already aboard her shuttle.

MINKOWSKI
Then let's have the real briefing.

HERA
My pleasure. Officer Eiffel is on diversionary duty.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Keep Captain Lovelace offsite, and make sure she doesn't attempt to contact either one of us during the procedure.

Eiffel COUGHS.

EIFFEL
I'll lead her on a merry chase.

HERA
Meanwhile, Commander Minkowski will go to engineering, where I'll walk her through the process of rewiring my sensory scanners.

MINKOWSKI
And we're going to need at least three hours, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oh, don't worry. It's still the S.S. Catastrophe, and I'll be playing the role of Igor for tonight's performance, so it should be a long and torturous affair. Who knows when I'll trip over some cables or "accidentally" blow a fuse?

MINKOWSKI
Oh God. Don't overdo it. We want her distracted, not murderously enraged.

EIFFEL
One strictly mediocre mechanical assistant, coming up.
(clicks tongue)
Hera, anything else for Team Desperate to keep in mind?

MINKOWSKI
What else do you need? A weather report?

HERA
Actually, Commander, my sensors *are* picking up some strange readings from -

MINKOWSKI
It's paranoid with a chance of explosion, okay Eiffel?
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
So do what you do best: keep your superior officer from accomplishing absolutely anything.

EIFFEL
Aye aye, sir!

MINKOWSKI
Okay.
(opens door)
Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - ENGINEERING - 10 MINUTES LATER

We rejoin Minkowski as she makes her way to the back of the engineering section. She's mid-conversation with Hera.

HERA
I'm trying to stay levelheaded here, but it's like... you know that reference Eiffel's made?

MINKOWSKI
You mean all of Western pop culture?

HERA
No, the Pirate thing. It's like, "Good job, Hera. Thank you for the update. I'm definitely going to kill you in the morning." I just don't think she understands what she's doing.

MINKOWSKI
I know. It's tougher on you than any of us, Hera. But if we're gonna beat her, we have to stay calm.

HERA
I know, I know. It just gets to me sometimes.
(beat)
What do you think our chances are?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Even if this plan *wasn't* a Doug Eiffel original, it's still a long shot.

HERA
One of those did wonders against -

MINKOWSKI
This isn't Hilbert. This... We don't know what she's capable of. Except that it's already more than we gave her credit for.

HERA
So why are you doing this?

MINKOWSKI
Because I've been wrong before, and I want to believe that I can be again.
(then)
I need to at least try *something* before I do what... Well, we have to try it.

She arrives at a large circuit box in the back of the room.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
All right, I'm in position.

HERA
Open up the main casing.

She does - KA-THUNK! It's a mess of HUMMING and SPINNING parts. Even without visuals, it SOUNDS complicated.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh... Hera, this looks a little... intense.

HERA
We're tricking a space sensory reconnaissance system into thinking it's being bombarded by non-existent asteroids. What were you expecting?

MINKOWSKI
Umm... Not sure. There's just a lot in here.
(reaching in)
What does this even -

HERA
(instant, dangerous)
DON'T TOUCH THAT.

Minkowski pulls back her hand quickly.

HERA (CONT'D)
No touching of the big red cable.
(ahem)
Sorry, Commander. A lot of different systems feed into this hub. I really, really need you to be careful here.

MINKOWSKI
Maybe this...isn't the best idea. Maybe we should come back to this?

HERA
You mean tomorrow? When you'll be stuck babysitting Lovelace and it'll be Eiffel trying to do this?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Right. Tell me what to do.

And as they dive into the work, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SPACESHIP - FLIGHT DECK - MEANWHILE

BZZT! BZZT! Lovelace is working on an open circuitry panel. It SPARKS unhappily. She WINCES.

LOVELACE
Oww...

EIFFEL
You good?

LOVELACE
Yeah...
(going back to work)
Were you perhaps thinking of lending me a hand with these, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Sure, I w*as* thinking about that. But then you said you were good, so... I'm getting some mixed signals here.

LOVELACE
Let me clarify: help with these.

EIFFEL
Of course, Captain. I'm just gonna... take a moment to... *appraise* the situation. To devise the best strategy with which to -
(yawns)
- to tackle this problem.

LOVELACE
Hold this, strategy-guy.

Back to work. BZZT!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Ow! Goddammit!

EIFFEL
See, you make it look so *effortless*, Captain, I couldn't possibly keep up with your mechanical -

LOVELACE
Shut up.

We hear more ARCING and then the sound of a CASE CLOSING.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
All right, that should do it. Stand by for booster system test.

EIFFEL
(keying in commands)
Standing by.

Lovelace FLIPS a SWITCH. We hear a mechanical system not so much come to life as SPUTTER and COUGH to life.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uhhh, getting a lot of systems in the red, Captain, and warnings -

LOVELACE
Yes, thank you, Officer, I still have ears. Shutting down.

We hear them FLIPPING various SWITCHES back to the off position. Lovelace SIGHS in frustration.

EIFFEL
Booster system shut down complete. What would you like to try next?

LOVELACE
Give me a second, Eiffel.

She turns back to the engineering. For a frustrated BEAT we stay on her looking over the equipment. Then -

EIFFEL
If you were thinking of giving up on this, now would be a good time.

LOVELACE
What? We need the booster systems online. Without it we'll never be able to -

EIFFEL
Not what I meant.

She looks at him, confused - and then she gets it.

LOVELACE
No. Out of the question.

EIFFEL
Permission to speak freely? Sir?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Speak. Carefully.

EIFFEL
I get it. You've spent *a lot* of time on this ship. There's a lot riding on this thing working -

LOVELACE
Our *lives,* for instance...

EIFFEL
- yes, that, but... there's a time to stick to your guns and a time to wake up and smell the *atomic dynamite.*

LOVELACE
It's starting to work. We're *getting there.*

EIFFEL
Yes. Every night Hera tells me how impressed she is with our progress - right before she casually mentions how we almost set off the reactor core half a dozen times.

LOVELACE
What does she know about -

EIFFEL
A lot. I'll grant you, her estimates can be on the buzzkill side, but I tend to pay attention when they involve everything and everyone exploding.

He stops, waiting for her rebuttal. When it doesn't come -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Every time we try to get steering or navigation online a different part of the ship falls apart and, lest you forget, we almost *died* three days ago. Chances are we run out of duct tape and/or luck before we make it through our twelve-step program. So... Can we at least talk about this?

As he awaits Lovelace's answer, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - ENGINEERING - 1100 HOURS

Minkowski and Hera, mid-hardware surgery.

HERA
To the left. Now, pull the red cable out of the socket - gently - and put it aside.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

HERA
You're doing fine, Commander. Just please be careful and -

Minkowski shifts her weight slightly. The ship GROANS, and the LIGHT above her head FLICKERS.

HERA (CONT'D)
Don't. Touch. Anything else.

MINKOWSKI
Sorry. This is... really not my area of expertise, Hera.

HERA
You're almost done. This last part's really simple.

MINKOWSKI
You've said that a lot. *None* of this has been simple.

HERA
(forced calm)
You're doing great. Reconnect the leader to the main console, and then replace the image intake with the wire you just set aside.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

HERA
Just make sure you don't cross either one of them with the input feed for the light sensors.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

HERA
And don't - *careful!* - don't connect the processor *until* you've reset the pulse radar.

MINKOWSKI
(gritted teeth)
How could I forget...?

There's a SNAP and a CLICK, then a PLEASANT HUM as the array goes back online.

HERA
Sensory system back online. Well done, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
(palpable relief)
That's it?

HERA
It'll take a moment for the system to reconnect with my processors, but we should know if it worked momentarily.

MINKOWSKI
<u>If</u> it worked?

HERA
Again: tricking a complicated sensory system. Think of it as tactical brain damage: I know where everything goes, but it's more well-educated guess than exact scien-
(beat)
Huh.

MINKOWSKI
Huh? Everything okay?

HERA
Umm... Yeees? Sorry, I'm just getting a weird signal input and I'm not sure what it's -

BBZZT! Hera's voice suddenly cuts off. Minkowski's left alone with the steady hum of engineering.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?
(beat)
Are you there?

There's another silent BEAT. Then, suddenly, an ear-piercing KLAXON BLARES through the loudspeakers. WAA! WAA!

HERA
(robotic)
Warning. Warning. Lockdown mode initiated. Please stand clear.

We hear the sound of SLIDING METAL as BLAST DOORS descend over the entrance. They SLAM BACK UP just as violently.

MINKOWSKI
Hera! What's going on?!

Through the walls we hear the muffled sounds of more blast doors going crazy in other rooms. THUD, THUD, THUD...

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Damn it all...

After a BEAT -

HERA
(crackle of static)
- not sure what it's doing here -
(whoaa...)
Oh. I... I just went somewhere, didn't I?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, you did. Are you okay?

HERA
Um...I think so. I feel kinda weird. Like, like right after -

MINKOWSKI
Oh great, I'm one step closer to Hilbert. What was going on with the blast doors slamming up and down?

HERA
I don't know. Maybe... oh.

MINKOWSKI
Oh?

HERA
Oh dear.

MINKOWSKI
Oh no.

HERA
So, uh... funny story. The patch seems to have, uh, corrupted some of my code. That's probably why the lockdown procedure initiated.

MINKOWSKI
I'm guessing that's not good?

HERA
Remind me, is gangrene good? Give me a moment while I finish cycling through the interface and -
(beat)
Ah. Umm... It looks like I'm having some trouble accessing some of the Hephaestus systems.

MINKOWSKI
Which ones?

HERA
Now, before I tell you, let's... Take a moment to remember how important it is to stay calm.

MINKOWSKI
Hera...

HERA
And relaxed! To just not lose -

MINKOWSKI
Hera! What's not responding?

HERA
Ohhhh... This and that. The aft deck ventilation... Uh, radiography detection... pressurization...

MINKOWSKI
What!?

HERA
And docking bay lighting! That's it! Everything else is coming through loud and clear!

MINKOWSKI
Right.... So when Lovelace comes back everything will be normal, except for some stuffy rooms, a spotty lightbulb here and there, and the alarming deficit of <u>air</u>.

BEAT.

HERA
Do you think she'll notice?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
You know, Hera, I have a feeling she will. Okay. How do we fix it?

HERA
I could go into a de-bugging cycle. That would get rid of it. But... there's a 68% chance I'll lose all the adjustments we made in the changeover. So we'd -

MINKOWSKI
Please don't say it.

HERA
- have to do this all over again.

A BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
It's - okay. Okay. We'll think of something. I mean, Lovelace is with Eiffel. We have time. Right?

HERA
Right...

And off of that comforting note...

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SPACESHIP - FLIGHT DECK - MEANWHILE

We come back into the space on the sound of a VALVE being TIGHTENED. KRR-K! KRR-K! KRR-K!

EIFFEL
Sooo... Thoughts?

KRR-K! KRR-K!

LOVELACE
I think we should get back to work.

EIFFEL
C'mon. I'm doing everything I can to get the Mystery Machine rolling. Five minutes of your time?

LOVELACE
Are you? Doing your part?

EIFFEL
(Mr. Indignation)
I - I have been in here day in and day out. I have poured unfortunately non-metaphorical amounts of blood, sweat, and tears into this engine. I've been -

LOVELACE
What are the other two doing right now?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(slow and pointed)
The Commander and Hera are repairing a malfunction in the electrical system.

LOVELACE
Wrong answer. Try again.

EIFFEL
Listen, lady. I've got the Cigarette Smoking Man breathing down my neck, Comrade Honeydew using me as an Easy Bake Oven for Space-nish Influenza, and Commander Queeg riding my back. And that was all *before* you appeared with a powerful urge to blow up my timeshare. What, exactly, do you think I have the energy to try?!

Lovelace just waits for him to finish his little speech.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well?!

LOVELACE
What are the other two doing?

EIFFEL
I already told you, and I'm not gonna repeat it if you keep asking like you think I'm an idiot.

LOVELACE
I don't think you're an idiot, Officer Eiffel. But I *know* you're stalling. You both are. You have done everything you thought you could get away with to delay these repairs. Presumably while you came up with a plan to permanently sabotage them.

EIFFEL
That's -

LOVELACE
I can only assume Minkowski isn't here because she's setting that plan in motion.

EIFFEL
You're wrong.

LOVELACE
Say it again?

EIFFEL
You're wrong.

But his voice is sounding less and less steady. She stares at him for a BEAT, unblinking. Finally -

LOVELACE
I'm **not.** But that's okay. You know why? Because you still have time, Officer Eiffel. I want you and the Commander to come around. Because rest assured: my way is the only way off the Hephaestus, and any attempt to stop it is just going to get more people hurt. You believe I can do that, right?

EIFFEL
(barely audible)
Yes.

LOVELACE
Good. Don't make me.

EIFFEL
We're. Not. Doing. Anything.

LOVELACE
You're *not* going to catch me with my guard down. You're not going to trick me, this isn't a fight you're going to win, you're gonna need a bigger boat. Understood?

EIFFEL
Yes... Sir.

LOVELACE
Excellent. Now hand me the wrench and get back to work.

As Eiffel turns his attention to the machinery, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - ENGINEERING - ONE HOUR LATER

Minkowski DRUMS HER FINGERS against the wall.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? Thoughts?

HERA
I... maybe. We could try to stick it out long enough for me to archive the changes. But I can't promise that... that something wouldn't happen to the station.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I'm not risking you or the Hephaestus.

HERA
I know. It's okay, Commander, I think I've figured out a work around for the -

At that exact moment, Hera GLITCHES, the KLAXON GOES OFF again and the LIGHTS FLICKER OMINOUSLY.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
Damn it. It just slipped. Sorry, Commander. Also, oww.

MINKOWSKI
Are... is this hurting you?

HERA
No. Well, it's not exactly pleasant, but it's not like - oh. Oh, I'm really stupid.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HERA
One of the main power lines for the station's central processors runs through the engineering section. If you interrupt the power flow, it should be enough to cause the station's operating system to crash.

MINKOWSKI
How is that a *good* thing?

HERA
Because that would automatically make my system purge the bad code, but it wouldn't target the adjustments we've made. I'd reset to the last autosave, not the last hard save.

MINKOWSKI
Would it hurt you?

HERA
It's a **crash**, Commander. They call it that for a reason.

MINKOWSKI
You know what I mean. Is there a risk of permanent damage?

BEAT.

HERA
Yes. That's a risk. The recovery system should be able to restore any information that's lost during reboot, but it's a short window before I start to experience data loss.

MINKOWSKI
How short a window?

HERA
You would have to get to the bridge really quickly after -

MINKOWSKI
How quickly?

BEAT.

HERA
Three minutes. Give or take.

MINKOWSKI
No, forget it. That's far too dangerous.

HERA
Oh, yes, how silly of me, let's just go with one of those *safe* viable plans that we have lying around. Oh wait.

MINKOWSKI
You're spending too much time with Eiffel.

HERA
I know it's dangerous, Commander. **I'm** the one it's dangerous for. But do you have any other ideas?

MINKOWSKI
No. Just, no. I hate to bring it up, Hera, but you've been wrong about these things before. What if you're wrong now?

HERA
I'm not. Commander, I know my record on this station hasn't been perfect, but this will work. I know I can get these systems running properly and I know you won't let anything happen to me.

Minkowski shuts her eyes, rubbing her temples.

MINKOWSKI
Goddammit... All right, tell me what to do.

She REOPENS the case and looks into the mess of wires.

HERA
You remember the big red cable?

MINKOWSKI
The one I'm not supposed to touch?

HERA
That's our guy.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, so... What?

HERA
You just... Pull it out. Wait ten seconds and then put it back.

MINKOWSKI
And that's it?

HERA
No, then you haul ass to the bridge and get me running again.

MINKOWSKI
Right. Okay. Three minutes.

HERA
Hundred and eighty seconds.

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Here we go. Ready?

BEAT.

HERA
(small)
Ready.

Minkowski gives the big red cable a YANK. The effect is immediate, as all machinery sounds STOP. A WARNING CHIME goes off. Minkowski's not minding any of it, though.

MINKOWSKI
... Seven... Eight... Niiine...
TEN.

She JAMS the big red cable back into place. It SNAPS back into place and... Nothing happens.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Oh goddammit, you automatic piece
of... C'mon.
(beat)
Turn on.
(beat)
Turn on.
(beat)
Turn on!

She SMACKS the side of the casing, and, miraculously, there's an immediate ELECTRICAL CRACKLE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Thank you!

And she's out!

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - TWO AND A HALF MINUTES LATER

A DOOR FLIES OPEN as Minkowski spills into the room.

MINKOWSKI
Comeoncomeoncomeon...

We hear as she furiously POUNDS KEYSTROKES into the system.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Stay with me... Just... There!

She hits a SWITCH and we hear the familiar sound of the PROCESSOR REBOOTING. Minkowski looks around anxiously.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera? Hera?

Instead, she gets the BUZZER of the Comms system.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Oh good...
(clears her throat)
Roger, shuttle. This is the Hephaestus.

LOVELACE
(over Comms)
Commander. We're about done here, transitioning back to the station.

MINKOWSKI
Affirmative. We'll start the pressure exchange from our end.

LOVELACE
Thank you. Also, we're having some trouble with the booster system. Could you have Hera do a reading of our fuel's energy input rate?

MINKOWSKI
Umm... Yes... That would be...

Finally - with a crack of static from the speakers -

HERA
43 gigajoules per gallon, Captain.

Silently, Minkowski lets out an enormous SIGH of relief.

LOVELACE
Hmm, right. Thank you, Hephaestus. Shuttle out.

BUZZER. Minkowski looks up.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? Is that you? Are you okay?

HERA
(mock robotic voice)
Who is this Hera you speak of?
(beat)
Joke, Commander. I'm fine. I'm...
here. All of me.

Minkowski lets out one last, exhausted, GROAN of relief.

MINKOWSKI
Oh my God, I'm going to kill you.

HERA
Not detecting any process or coding
anomalies, all systems functioning
normally.
(beat)
Thank you.

MINKOWSKI
You're very welcome. Now, please
excuse me while I lie down for a
couple of hours.

BUZZER. Minkowski ignores it for a BEAT, but then it goes off again. BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Shuttle?

EIFFEL
(over Comms)
Hey Commander, it's just me. You
alone?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel. How did things go on
your end?

EIFFEL
Oh we had... Ups and downs. We
should... Talk. About some...
Stuff.

Minkowski doesn't want to talk about "stuff." She wants this damn day to be over. But instead she says -

MINKOWSKI
I'll meet you in one hour.

EIFFEL
Roger, Commander. See you there.

And off the sound of the BUZZER, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - OBSERVATION DECK - 2200 HOURS

Everything is still for a moment. Then - KA-THUNK. The DOOR OPENS, then SLAMS SHUT. For a BEAT there's silence. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Here's the deal.

She DRAWS a LONG BREATH.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
We're in over our heads. We're outgunned, and we have no idea what we're doing. Which isn't *that* much of a departure from business as usual around here, but... This is different. She's different.

She lets out a tiny snort of BITTER LAUGHTER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
You know, all the craziness on this station? Conspiracies? Aliens? I honestly don't care about any of it. I care about exactly *one* thing: getting my people - all my people - back to Earth. And I can't do that if Lovelace blows up half my crew.

She SIGHS, and forces herself to continue.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Which means... That we have to do everything in our power to stop this madness. Which means, God help us, that we need your help.

For a long time, there's just silence. Finally -

HILBERT
What did you have in mind?

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 24.

WOLF 359

"LAME-O SUPERHERO ORIGIN STORY"

by

Sarah Shachat

WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 659 of the Hephaestus Mission.

BEGIN EPISODE 25

START RECORDING:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - 1300 HOURS

We hear CHAINS RATTLE as Eiffel unlocks Dr. Hilbert's restraints.

EIFFEL
There.

HILBERT
Mmm, much better. Thank you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
You're *not* welcome. Let's just get this over with.

HILBERT
I notice some changes from our previous encounter. Where are the firearms? The handcuffs?

EIFFEL
Don't look so pleased with yourself. You're only on the mad scientist work-release program to help change Hera's station monitors. Anything else -

HILBERT
(bored)
Yes, yes.

EIFFEL
No, *no.* If you even blink without my permission, I will shove a screwdriver *so far* up your -

HILBERT
I went over terms of my... cooperation with Commander Minkowski. In great detail. This unpleasantness is unnecessary.

Eiffel HUFFS and GRABS his toolkit.

EIFFEL
Whatever. Let's go, Finklestein.

Eiffel OPENS and CLOSES the door. They exit into...

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUUOUS

EIFFEL
We'll start in engineering and move up from there. Minkowski and Lovelace are working on the shuttle for the whole rotation, so -

HILBERT
Work should not take more than two hours. The Hephaestus monitoring system is based on a simple -

EIFFEL
Hey! Hey, hey!

HILBERT
What?

EIFFEL
Stay to my left, Hilbert.

HILBERT
I am on your left.

Eiffel COUGHS.

EIFFEL
You're drifting.

HILBERT
Towards what, exactly? Other side of wall?

EIFFEL
Just... float where I can see you, okay?

HILBERT
What is wrong today, Eiffel? Where is cheery, incomprehensible Communications Officer we all know and love?

EIFFEL
He's stuck doing repairs with the KGB.

HILBERT
Eiffel, stopping that woman is as much in my interest as yours. We are -
(chuckles)

- in same boat, no?

EIFFEL
No, Darth Virus, we're not. And remember that I was the one who foiled your plans for world domination the last time.

Another half-BEAT.

EIFFEL
What?!

HILBERT
Nothing.

EIFFEL
You're looking at me.

HILBERT
I am... considering your last statement.

EIFFEL
Oh, about how I beat you?

HILBERT
If you insist on calling it that. But even in what I will... very generously term your victory, Eiffel, you were dependent upon other agents.

EIFFEL
Say that in English.

HILBERT
You did not beat me. You needed help from AI, from Minkowski.

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah. It's called being a part of the crew. You ever meet anyone that could get things done all on their lonesome?

BEAT. Hilbert looks at Eiffel levelly for a moment.

HILBERT
Only one. Her name is Isabel Lovelace.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHIP - ENGINE BAY - 1315 HOURS

Lovelace and Minkowski are deep into engine repair. We hear a SWTICH getting FLICKED and the THRUM of a turbine spinning to life. And a second later we hear the same SPUTTERING and CLANGING to a halt.

LOVELACE
Damn it.

MINKOWSKI
I still think it's the alignment of the turbine filters.

LOVELACE
No, it's not. There's feedback coming from the power couplings.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Given the stuff you were using as sealant? Not surprised.
(cracks her knuckles)
C'mon, let's open up the turbines and take a look.

LOVELACE
Half a dozen other systems could be causing these short circuits. Why are you set on the turbines?

MINKOWSKI
We're gonna have to run diagnostics on them sooner or later. If they check out fine then we'll know. What are we gonna lose?

LOVELACE
<u>Time</u>. A lot of it.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, you cannot just order the ship to quick-march. All this mess? It's going to take time.

Lovelace looks at Minkowski for an uncomfortable moment.

LOVELACE
How did Eiffel put it?

MINKOWSKI
How did Eiffel put what?

LOVELACE
Don't be coy, Minkowski.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, that. Yeah. He told me. You unnerved him pretty badly - which, on a personal level, is a huge compliment to your command presence. I haven't been able to scare him like that in God knows how long.

LOVELACE
You don't need to. He trusts you.

MINKOWSKI
And you don't.

LOVELACE
Of course not. Should I?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Whatever you think we're... doing or... trying, we're not. You have my word.

LOVELACE
Even though all your repair suggestions take at least twice as long as mine?

MINKOWSKI
We are asking this heap of scrap metal and radiation to take us across eight light years of vacuum. Can't be too careful.

LOVELACE
You really can't. And on the subject of being careful, Commander...
(slow and deliberate)
Any attempt to delay these repairs or, God help you, sabotage this ship would be an act of Olympic-level stupidity... and I say that with a lot of fondness in my heart. I'm not here to be your friend, I'm not here to play nice, but right now? I <u>am</u> the only

person actively working on getting us out of this pointless nightmare. If you get in my way, very bad things will happen. Are we clear?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Crystal.

LOVELACE
Good, because all of these antics are the nice way of saying - again, with the greatest respect - **drop it.**

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
That's the *nice* way?

LOVELACE
Pray you never hear the rough way. Now, with all of that said: would it be productive for us to disassemble the turbine?

Minkowski looks Lovelace right in the eyes.

MINKOWSKI
<u>Yes</u>.

LOVELACE
Okay. Let's get to it.

As a hatch opens, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING ROOM - 1330 HOURS

RATCHET. Eiffel and Hilbert are at work on the sensor.

HILBERT
May I have wire-cutters?

EIFFEL
Why do you need them?

HILBERT
(fed up)
To cut a wire. Really, Eiffel!

Trust me, or take me back to observation deck. But pick one! Only thing you gain by this... angry kitten face you are making is wasted time.

Eiffel lets out a LOW GROWL, but a moment later we hear him HANDING OVER the wire cutters.

EIFFEL
Here.
(beat)
No. Fine. You wanna do this, Kurtz? We'll go. No, I don't trust you. And you wanna know why? Because you don't even get why I don't trust you!

BEAT.

HILBERT
I know that was English, but please repeat it?

EIFFEL
Me. No trust you. With a toothpick. For all I know, that's how you injected me with your crazy death elixir in the first place!

HILBERT
I do not think a toothpick would be an effective transfer mecha-

EIFFEL
Not the point!

HILBERT
What is point?

EIFFEL
That you don't think you've done anything wrong! You think I'm the one with a bad case of the touchy-feelies! All you did was put a lame-o superhero origin story serum in my body. What could possibly be wrong with that?

HILBERT
Eiffel, I have told you: the Decima virus is in your system, yes, but latent. It can be

controlled. I have made vast improvements since last round of full-scale trials.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I know, I know. It's new! It's improved! It makes you cough up your lungs at a slower rate! It's the Decima Virus 5G! 799 plus tax!

Hilbert LAUGHS.

HILBERT
You are the one that does not "get" it. You think *I'm* in control of this project? It was *Command* that classified you as expendable asset. That gave you first exposure sample before I even knew your name. *They* made the decision. *They* gave orders to terminate your life at Christmas. My job has always been to keep you alive and well. I did not ask for this hand, Eiffel, but I will play it through to the end. For your sake as much as anything else.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Reason #3007 why I don't trust you: "expendable asset."

HILBERT
What am I supposed to do, Eiffel? Destroy the virus samples?

EIFFEL
Wha - I - you *could do that*?!

Hilbert GRUMBLES. He CLOSES the panel.

HILBERT
The hard drives you and Minkowski took contain full inventory and containment protocols. If that will make you "feel better" then by all means! Instead of rigging ship to stop mad captain, we can go back to my lab and smash things! You won't have to think about experiment with potential to

radically improve human life! For however long you live, in any case. But maybe that's good! Maybe that's what real, cool pop culture person wants! To go like Lambert and Hui!

EIFFEL
From the first Hephaestus mission?
(beat)
How did they go?

Hilbert SIGHS.

HILBERT
Slowly. A shame. Dr. Hui was very gifted computationally, if too easily distracted. Officer Lambert was no great mind. But I liked him. Very professional.

EIFFEL
Didn't stop you, though, did it?

HILBERT
Nothing stops science, Eiffel. The only question is whether it helps or hurts.

EIFFEL
And there's Reason #3008. Do you even hear how messed up you sound? Talking about people you knew, people you supposedly liked! Like, like, I don't know, phone apps.
(mock Hilbert voice)
"Oh, this one was super effective, that one could've been more useful!"

HILBERT
Hui was very nice man. All that crew, very nice people. Now they're very dead people. Or deranged. What did all that niceness <u>accomplish</u>? Who has it helped? Eiffel, you have chance to make amazing contribution to humanity.

EIFFEL
(makes a buzzer sound)
Nope, sorry. It's a nice speech, Doc, but it'd sound a lot better

if they hadn't died because you **experimented on them.** They had the same chance.

HILBERT
No, is different. We can do better. This time -

EIFFEL
No! No this time! This isn't even a choice! Nobody asked me if I wanted to be your guinea pig.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Well... I'm asking you now. As long as you are on this station, we have opportunity to do something of real worth. If you do not want to push experimentation further I... will respect that. But at least believe that I know my own work! That the only thing I want is positive results!

Eiffel considers Hilbert's words for a moment. Then he GRUMBLES:

EIFFEL
We don't have time for this.

HILBERT
Hmmph. Back to work, then.

EIFFEL
Yeah. Back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHIP - ENGINE BAY - LATER

Lovelace and Minkowski are in downtown Filter City, WRENCHING APART the now disassembled turbine.

LOVELACE
Okay. There. Secure it?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Got it.

CLANK. RACHET. RACHET.

LOVELACE
So... what is your plan anyway?

MINKOWSKI
... what plan?

LOVELACE
The Plan. The grand plan you have to get your people out of here. To get everyone back home in one piece and show Command who's boss.

Minkowski opens her mouth. Then closes it. Then opens it. Then closes it. Umm...

LOVELACE
I knew it. You have nothing.

MINKOWSKI
That's not true! I... I have three people who depend on me. I have a space station full of corporate secrets, and some of the most advanced biomolecular research anyone's ever done. And - and we might be on the verge of first contact with alien life!

LOVELACE
(nodding along)
You're as good as dead, then. None of that's going to get the job done. You need something stronger.

MINKOWSKI
Like revenge?

LOVELACE
For instance.

MINKOWSKI
(exhales)
Look, I'm all in favor of getting even with Cutter and the rest of Canaveral, no question there. But don't you ever wonder if you might be going too far? The biggest resource that we have on our side *is* the Hephaestus. And if I, for instance, blew it up? I'd lose a considerable degree of leverage over the enemy. Not to mention the element of surprise for my one-woman suicide mission.

LOVELACE
Fun, though.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, so everything I say or do gets scrutinized, but you just get to laugh off the problems with *your* plan?

LOVELACE
At least I have one.
(beat)
You're afraid, Minkowski. You're afraid you'll fail those mostly-innocent, entirely-wonderful people who've made the mistake of trusting you. I've been there. But sitting around, doing nothing? Stumbling from one emergency to the next? C'mon. We both know the word for that.

MINKOWSKI
We - we've been interrogating Hilbert. We're going to use that information and -

LOVELACE
And what? Win the science fair? **Wake up**! This is the fight of our lives. And you are sitting around, in a barrel, waiting to get shot. I'm sorry if you disagree with some of my calls, but honestly? It's about time <u>somebody</u> started making choices around here.

Well then. Minkowski doesn't quite know how to respond to that, so she turns back towards the engine.

After a moment -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Huh. That's weird.

LOVELACE
Whatever you say.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(straining)
No, really. I think this was -
(CLANK)
- way out of alignment. Must've

gotten knocked around pretty badly
when you docked with us.
(CRANK)
There. Can you?

LOVELACE
Yeah, I got it.

VROOOM. First good sound the ship has made all day.

MINKOWSKI
That sounds better.

LOVELACE
It does.
(beat)
All right. Come on. Let's clean
this up and go run the sequence.

MINKOWSKI
(no let's stay here!)
Sh-shouldn't we keep working on
the filters for the other turbine?

LOVELACE
No, better to see if that made
things better or worse, keep track
of what affects what. Can't be too
careful, right?

MINKOWSKI
(d'oh)
Right. Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - LATER

Eiffel and Hilbert are heading to the last sensor. Eiffel COUGHS.

After a LONG BEAT -

HILBERT
All right. Out with it.

EIFFEL
I've been thinking.

HILBERT
What a refreshing change of pace.

EIFFEL
This pet project of yours? Decima? How'd you decide any of this was a good idea? I get you like science, but -

HILBERT
Eiffel, I don't "like" science.

EIFFEL
Ha!

HILBERT
The Decima project is my life's work. But I don't "like" it the way you like pizza or your useless cigarettes.

EIFFEL
You underestimate my attachment to both of those things.

HILBERT
That is just it! It is *attachment*, no greater utility.

EIFFEL
Right, and you're so concerned with the lilies of the field and the floppy, hoppy bunnies.

HILBERT
All I'm saying is there is no room for affection in science. There shouldn't be!

EIFFEL
You got any more of those, Confucius?

HILBERT
(ugh)
Fine, fine. Let's just find the monitor.

EIFFEL
(muttering darkly)
Bet you've never met a bunny you didn't experiment on.

HILBERT
(he finally snaps)
Oh, sure! Sure! Big mean scientist should never do anything with

risk! Even if could reap vast benefits and end large amount of suffering! Should not find way to understand cell development and degradation! Much too scary! Just pat little rabbits on the head and never think about death! It works so well! Everyone does just fine! Just keep delaying anti-radiation medication, put the funding somewhere else! Who needs it?! Just have pets and American television! That made real difference for sister, can make up for everything!

STUNNED SILENCE. Hilbert realizes he's said too much. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
Wait, wait, wait. You have a *sister*?!

Hilbert GROANS.

HILBERT
I - I was speaking hypothetically! The point is -

EIFFEL
- the point is that you just revealed something genuine about yourself! 10 points to Slytherin!

HILBERT
I - it could all be clever lie!

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah, I don't think so.

HILBERT
Ah, look! Monitor. This conversation not productive, let's -

EIFFEL
No, no, no. You want me to trust you? Time for Pop Quiz: Prove You're A Real Boy edition. You answer a question, I give you a tool, and *maybe*, maybe we both walk away with a door prize.

Hilbert GROANS. He OPENS the panel.

HILBERT
It is all...shallow nonsense. Just hand me socket wrench, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
"Shallow nonsense" is my job description. What's your sister's name?

HILBERT
(grr)
Fine.

EIFFEL
Fine's a weird name for a girl.

HILBERT
(gritted teeth)
Olga. Now. Give me. Socket wrench.

Eiffel does.

EIFFEL
There. Wasn't that fun?

TINKER, TINKER, TINKER. Hilbert PAUSES, seething.

HILBERT
I need the copper. Please.

EIFFEL
And I need to know how many of your siblings kept wabbits.

HILBERT
Just the one. And not rabbits. Cats. We were youngest. Older ones I don't remember. Already too far gone from radiation poisoning.

EIFFEL
From the what now?

HILBERT
I was four when Volgograd meltdown occurred. I remember it, in fact. Big cloud. Smelled sour, and... like burnt eggs. I turned bald before I was five.
(beat)
There. Is that sufficiently irrelevant detail? Hand me pliers.

EIFFEL
What happened to your sister?

HILBERT
I do not understand why this makes any difference to you.

EIFFEL
Is... is she okay?

HILBERT
Officer Eiffel - I haven't said one word about a member of your family. Not one. Can you perhaps do me the same courtesy?

After a BEAT, Eiffel hands him copper.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I - Yes. Okay.

HILBERT
Screwdriver.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Who are you?

HILBERT
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Last question. What's your name, Doctor?

Hilbert PAUSES for a moment.

HILBERT
Dmitri.

Eiffel hands him the screwdriver. He screws the casing on.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Dmitri Ilyich Volodin. That is my given name. And that was the last sensor. So. Are we done here?

EIFFEL
Okay.

There's a LONG PAUSE as the gears turn in Eiffel's head.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I still don't trust you, Dmitri Volodin. *At all*. But you can keep your death virus snack packs if they're so important.
(off Hilbert's smile)
Don't give me that grin, Tolstoy! We're going right back to the observation deck.

HILBERT
Of course. I expect nothing less.

EIFFEL
Yeah, well... good.

HILBERT
Not good. But, is a start. Maybe you'll come around. Maybe soon.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHIP - MAIN CABIN - LATER

DING! Lovelace and Minkowski are working their way through the start up sequence.

LOVELACE
Okay... life support.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. DING!

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can we hand this over to you? Run the sequence through to Interstellar Trajectory Vectoring. Let's just see how far we get.

HERA
Whatever you say, Commander.

LOVELACE
Thank you, Hera.

MINKOWSKI
You're awfully polite to her.

LOVELACE
Any reason I shouldn't be?

DING! (Step 8)

MINKOWSKI
It doesn't exactly align with the rest of your plans.

LOVELACE
Mmm.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, listen: you want to call me a coward? I can take that. You wanna call the shots? I won't pretend it isn't *fantastic* to have someone else who's competent enough to make decisions around here. But what I can't accept? The reason I haven't fallen into lockstep and started calling you sir? I do not understand why any officer worth a damn would risk their people's lives for something as selfish as revenge.

DING! (Step 9)

LOVELACE
You'd drop those scruples pretty fast if you'd knew what I've been through.

MINKOWSKI
Then explain it to me. Explain what happened so that I *really* understand.

For a BEAT, Lovelace thinks. DING! (Step 10)

LOVELACE
I want you to imagine losing Officer Eiffel. Imagine losing him slowly, by inches, so he knows there's no hope. Imagine having to be a leader to someone in that kind of pain and fear and darkness for several months.
(beat)
Now, imagine having to do it four times.

Hard to argue with that. DING! (Step 11)

MINKOWSKI
I can't. But Eiffel isn't the only

person on my crew. I care about him, *and* Hera, and, damn it all, even Hilbert! I care about *you*, Captain Lovelace. I know you don't believe me, but I am going to find a way to prove I want to help you.

DING! (Step 12) The engine PURRS like a happy kitty.

LOVELACE
(re: engine)
That's a good start.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, what -

HERA
This is an auto-confirmation that the start-up sequence has been completed.

LOVELACE
Please reconfirm. We need to be sure.

BEAT.

HERA
The start-up sequence has been successfully completed. Your spaceship is operational.

LOVELACE
(grinning)
Looks like you were right. It really was the turbines.

MINKOWSKI
Uhhh... Yes.

TYPE, TYPE. Lovelace goes over some instrument readings at the console. Everything is happily in the green.

LOVELACE
(appreciative whistle)
That <u>really</u> did the trick. Good thinking, Commander. I wouldn't have looked at those for *ages*.

Silent, horrified BEAT. And then -

MINKOWSKI
Happy to be of assistance.

What else is there to say?

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1500 HOURS

EIFFEL
You WHAT?!!

Eiffel COUGHS.

MINKOWSKI
I may have... no. No, I did fix Lovelace's ship.

EIFFEL
(angry hiss)
Why, in the name of every possible definition of sanity, would you do that?

MINKOWSKI
I didn't mean to! I wanted to give you and Hilbert enough time. I never dreamed it'd actually solve the VX3's problem.

EIFFEL
Well, congratulations, Commander. You are just *too good* at your job.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

EIFFEL
I can't believe you failed at *failing*! You had one job!

Minkowski SIGHS.

MINKOWSKI
I know.

EIFFEL
Okay. Well, we've got three hours until Lovelace wants to Boldly Go. Where do we spring this off-off Broadway production?

MINKOWSKI
What are you talking about?

EIFFEL
Sensors are in place. Everything else is set. We just need to switch Hera's inputs over and brace for fake comets.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... we lost our window. I know it's my fault and I'm sorry, but we don't have time for this anymore.

EIFFEL
What?

MINKOWSKI
We have to act more aggressively.

EIFFEL
Excuse me if I'm not convinced that the rational response to our setback here is whack-a-mole!

MINKOWSKI
I'm not - no one's getting whacked! But we are going to use the knockout gas.

EIFFEL
And when, exactly, is that gonna go down?

HERA
Um, five minutes aaaannd... Twenty-two seconds.

EIFFEL
<u>WHAT</u>?! Have you lost your mind?! What Freaky Friday Universe have we warped into where suddenly *you're* the ship idiot?!!

MINKOWSKI
Don't even start down that path with me, Eiffel. It does *not* end well for you.

EIFFEL
It cannot be worse than the mistake you're about to make.

MINKOWSKI
This is the backup plan we all agreed on, remember?! Just because

you don't have the nerve to pull the trigger doesn't mean we -

EIFFEL
I have PLENTY nerve!

Minkowski SCOFFS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, Glorious Leader, I've had it up to here with you writing me off. How about you listen to the person who stopped one crazy maniac already? Who got him to talk! Lovelace is expecting us to try something like this and it's going to backfire!

Eiffel has more, but he's RUN OUT OF BREATH. He COUGHS.

MINKOWSKI
We *don't have time* for you to pull some cotton candy rabbit out of your -

HERA
Commander, be quiet.

Now both of them notice Eiffel's COUGHING.

MINKOWSKI
Woah. Eiffel, maybe you should sit down?

EIFFEL
Just gotta... catch my breath.

Eiffel continues to COUGH, bringing something up his throat and SPITTING IT into his hand.

MINKOWSKI
That's...that's a lot of blood.

Eiffel looks down, stunned by the GLOB OF BLOOD AND TISSUE now floating around his palm.

EIFFEL
(hoarse)
Well, that's not good.

EIFFEL's overcome by COUGHING, more violent than before.

HERA
(small voice)

Officer Eiffel... what's wrong?

MINKOWSKI
Hera! We need medical assistance!
NOW!

MORE COUGHING. Eiffel's beginning TO SEIZE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Just hold on. It's gonna be okay.
Just - EIFFEL!

Eiffel loses consciousness, Minkowski too shocked to stop his body from slamming into a console with a sickening, but oh-so-dramatic -

THUNK.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 25.

WOLF 359

"DO NO HARM"

by

Zach Valenti

WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 659 and day 666 of the Hephaestus Mission.

BEGIN EPISODE 26:

START RECORDING:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1505 HOURS

We resume from the end of Episode 25. Eiffel's body SHAKES VIOLENTLY as another COUGHING FIT hits him.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel? Can you hear me? It's okay, I've got you.

For a minute, Eiffel's COUGHING SUBSIDES. It's replaced by RAGGED, GASPING BREATHS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Easy, easy. Just breathe. You're gonna -

He goes off again with an ENORMOUS HACK. We hear various items KNOCKED ABOUT as Eiffel CONVULSES.

HERA
Commander, what is happening?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! Easy. Stay with me.

HERA
Why is this happening? Is this -

MINKOWSKI
Decima. It's gotta be.

The DOOR OPENS. As Lovelace enters, a lot of things start to happen very quickly:

LOVELACE
Commander? What is - Oh God.

MINKOWSKI
Captain, help me.

Lovelace rushes to Minkowski's side. Eiffel's body continues THRASHING.

HERA
He said that it was under control.

MINKOWSKI
I know, Hera.

HACK, COUGH.

LOVELACE
Eiffel? Officer Eiffel?

HERA
He said he was giving him regular treatments to -

MINKOWSKI
I know, Hera.

COUGH, COUGH.

LOVELACE
God, he's burning up.

HERA
Commander, we can't just let him -

MINKOWSKI
Nobody's letting anyone -

LOVELACE
His pulse is low...

HERA
We need to -

Eiffel GURGLES OMINOUSLY.

LOVELACE
His eyes aren't responsive. He's going into shock.

HERA
What are you waiting for?! We need to -

MINKOWSKI
EVERYBODY QUIET!

And they get quiet. Even Eiffel's symptoms seem to subside.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(deadly calm)
Hera, prep the lab. Do whatever you can to raise the temperature and have its systems functional. Lovelace, keep Eiffel steady and get him down there. Quickly.

She turns to leave, but -

LOVELACE
Commander, stop.

MINKOWSKI
Don't even start with me! I am the Commander of this space station. My Communications Officer is in critical condition. I am getting my medical specialist, and you are not going to stop me.

LOVELACE
Of course I'm not.

Minkowski opens her mouth to argue - then stops. Wait what?

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
He needs medical attention - urgently - and, madman or not, Selberg's the only one that can give it to him. But if we're doing this, it's gonna be with my gun pointed at his head. *You* get Eiffel down the lab - *I'll* get the doctor.

Eiffel COUGHS WEAKLY.

MINKOWSKI
Fine. Let's go.

And as a DOOR OPENS, we...

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 10 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski has laid Eiffel out on the examination table.

MINKOWSKI
We're going to get through this. I promise. Just... hold on, Eiffel.

The DOOR OPENS. Lovelace all but tosses Hilbert into the lab and SLAMS THE DOOR behind her.

HILBERT
Careful, Captain, please.

LOVELACE
Watch yourself. You harm this man -

HILBERT
Yes, I heard you. Give me room. Commander, help me with these straps.

We hear Minkowski ADJUSTING STRAPS on the exam table.

BUSTLE, BUSTLE. SLAP, SLAP. We start hearing the slow but steady rhythmic beep of an EKG.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I need saline, metamizole, and a tongue depressor. Captain, if you could just move away from -

LOVELACE
Not a chance, you miserable leech. You want something? You go through me.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace...

LOVELACE
Let's start with that tongue depressor. What do you need it for?

HILBERT
This man does not have time for your useless suspicions.

LOVELACE
Then he doesn't have time for you to not answer my -

MINKOWSKI
Oh, for God's sake!

Minkowski OPENS A DRAWER and pulls out a tongue depressor.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Here! Tongue depressor. Hilbert, where's the other stuff?

HILBERT
Bottom freezer and third cabinet to the right. Blue bottles, second shelf. Am I enough of a physician to have my stethoscope, Captain?

LOVELACE
Here.

Lovelace THROWS IT at him. Without wasting any time, he puts the stethoscope to Eiffel's chest.

HILBERT
His blood pressure is very low, but...
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
There's no fluid in the lungs.

MINKOWSKI
Sooo that's good?

HILBERT
It's very, very bad - but I've seen worse. Keep him steady. I look for anti-viral agent.

A drawer OPENS and CLOSES.

LOVELACE
"Anti-viral" agent? How can we be sure that's -

MINKOWSKI
Not the time, Captain.

HILBERT
(to himself)
If I were experimental reverse-transcriptase inhibitor, where would I be....

LOVELACE
No, I'm serious.
(to Hilbert)
How can you prove that you're not just putting some other bioweapon into his body?

HILBERT
Freezer I think... but -

LOVELACE
SELBERG!

HILBERT
No! Selberg not here today, and Hilbert not taking questions! If you are here, you are helping. Otherwise, get out of way.

LOVELACE
Don't you dare order me on my own -

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace!

Lovelace turns around to find Minkowski's steely gaze.

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
Just leave. Go.

LOVELACE
Minkowski? You’re backing *him*?

MINKOWSKI
I am.

LOVELACE
Well, I am not going to let -

CRASH! Since this is ye olde radio we don't know what Minkowski throws or hits. We do, however, hear the very emphatic sound of SOMETHING SHATTERING.

MINKOWSKI
I said. Go.

For a tense moment there's silence. Then we hear the door OPEN and CLOSE. Lovelace has left.

HILBERT
Ah, here! Got it.

WHOOSH - GAS ESCAPES from a pressurized container. We hear him load the cartridge into an injector. The pieces SNAP TOGETHER and the machine comes to life with a WHIRR.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Commander, now is time for tongue depressor.

Eiffel GROANS as Minkowski inserts the stick in his mouth.

MINKOWSKI
Easy, easy, it's me...

HILBERT
Ready?

MINKOWSKI
Ready.

BANG - he empties the injector into Eiffel's arm.

EIFFEL
URRRRRGGG!

The EKG goes nuts as Eiffel WRITHES in pain on the table.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert...

HILBERT
(firm)
It will pass. Keep pressure or he will choke on his own tongue.

A LONG BEAT. Then...

Eiffel's BREATHING EASES and his HEART RATE SLOWS DOWN.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Hmm...

CLICK. Hilbert begins examining Eiffel with a flashlight.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Right... Right... Good...

MINKOWSKI
What did you give him?

HILBERT
Powerful serum, to counteract the virus's effects while we neutralize active agents. Give us time to work.

MINKOWSKI
That... seems too easy.

Hilbert EXHALES.

HILBERT
(this is gonna be a long night)
That was easy part. Eiffel's body is now fighting an aggressive outside agent. Immune system is reacting violently, making body inhospitable for Decima. Left unchecked, process will kill Eiffel before it kills virus.

A BEAT. Minkowski wearily absorbs that information.

MINKOWSKI
You said it was under control.

HILBERT
I said I could maintain dormancy. I said delicate process. I said regular treatments. How many of those have you seen me administer from cell in observation deck?

MINKOWSKI
I never saw you give him any of your damn treatments! I never -

HILBERT
You were not part of it. Now you are.
(beat)
Pass me the saline.
(beat)
Please.

She does. And as they get back to work, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - TEN MINUTES LATER

Lovelace is at the console, arms crossed. After a moment -

LOVELACE
Hera.

HERA
(pointed exasperation)
How may I be of service, Captain?

LOVELACE
Report. What's happening in there?

HERA
Dr. Hilbert is still tending Officer Eiffel. No significant changes since the last time you asked. Four minutes ago.

LOVELACE
I want him under constant surveillance. You're going to help me with this one, Hera.

HERA
Just when I think you've ran out of ways to be wrong, you push the envelope yet again.

LOVELACE
What is wrong with you people? Why are you and Minkowski standing up for Selberg?

HERA
We're not.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
But, you know when's a great time to ask me to help with your vendetta against Dr. Hilbert? *Anytime other than when my best friend is dying.*

LOVELACE
I am trying to help your friend!

Hera snorts.

HERA
Excuse me if I find this a bit much coming from the one person who's definitely trying to kill me.

LOVELACE
You don't know what you're getting yourselves into. I'm not Commander Minkowski, I'm -

HERA
No, you're not. You're not that lucky.
(beat)
I know in your head you're some kind of white knight, charging in to save us helpless idiots. But out here, in reality, Officer Eiffel and Commander Minkowski have actually stopped Hilbert's evil plans and kept everyone on their crew alive. Both things which, last I checked, you never managed to do. Maybe some new evil plot is afoot. If it is, we'll figure out a way to stop it. We don't need you to babysit us.

LOVELACE
No. You won't see it coming. I've seen Selberg's dark side.

HERA
Bully for you.
(beat)
I get it. He hurt you. He hurt people that you loved. I know. It's not about the pain, or the loss, or the guilt... It's the impotence.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
It's feeling there's nothing you can do because someone has taken your life away from you. Because someone thinks so little of you, they can choose whether you live or die. And knowing there's nothing you can do about it. No one should have to live through that.

LOVELACE
Then why are you arguing with -

HERA
(let me finish)
And no one who's gone through it should have the gall to do the same thing to anyone else. Ever.
(beat)
Have you even thought about what happens when you climb aboard your shuttle and explode off into the sunset? What happens to me?

LOVELACE
Hera, I want this station to disappear. I want it more badly than I can put into words. But I would never do it at the cost of your life. As soon as I realized that we couldn't transfer you to my ship I -

HERA
Oh, oh, oh, so you... what? Just let us think that you were going to blow me up? For weeks? How silly of us to be so upset over -

LOVELACE
What choice did you give me? Between the secret meetings, the plans the three of you were cooking up? When did you ever give me any reason to trust you?
(beat)
Yes, I've lied. I've kept you scared. I've probably even made you hate me. Because fear is the only language the three of you listen to.

HERA
You need a better dictionary.

LOVELACE
What am I supposed to do? Just go and leave you alone with that -

HERA
What a fantastic idea, Captain, I'm glad that you - finally - got there. But yes, pretty please, with sugar on top: leave us alone.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Fine. If... if anyone needs me, I'm going to be prepping my ship.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as she exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP! The EKG is making very alarming noises.

MINKOWSKI
What's happening?

HILBERT
If I could have quiet for one moment...

That's when Eiffel starts to make a new kind of CHOKING SOUND. It's a horrible, wet WHEEZING.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert? Can he -

HILBERT
No. Air going in, not coming out. His lung just collapsed.

He OPENS A DRAWER, JANGLING METAL INSTRUMENTS. He picks one item, and LIFTS IT UP. It sounds like a small sword.

MINKOWSKI
Is what I think it's for?

HILBERT
Need to drain body cavity. Please stand aside.

Hilbert TAPS Eiffel's chest once... twice... three times, finding just the right spot. He takes a DEEP BREATH.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Okay.

He PLUNGES THE NEEDLE in. Minkowski WINCES.

The slightly wet HISS of air seeps out of his body. Then Eiffel starts BREATHING again, taking DEEP, RASPY BREATHS.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Good. Good, Officer Eiffel. Deep breaths. Deep breaths...
(not looking up)
Water, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
Drink some water. You're very pale.

MINKOWSKI
I'm fine, Doctor.

HILBERT
(shrugs)
Hydration is key. Let's get some more saline into his system.

Hilbert begins prepping an IV.

HERA
Commander? I don't want to distract you here -

MINKOWSKI
No, please. Distract.

HERA
Captain Lovelace just boarded her shuttle. But she hasn't touched the armory, or armed any explosives.

MINKOWSKI
All right. Not much we can do about that right this minute. Keep me updated on her status.

HERA
Of course.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
(beat)
Commander? Can I...I'd like to have a frank word with Doctor Hilbert.

HILBERT
(still working)
What is so special you need Commander authorization?

HERA
Sir? Permission to speak freely?

MINKOWSKI
Granted. What's on your mind, Hera?

There's a small CRACKLE OF STATIC in Hera's voice as she begins:

HERA
Ooh, that's a relief. Thank you, Commander. Normally my decorum protocols constrain how I address station officers, but I need what I'm about to say to actually sink into Doctor Hilbert's pathetic, twisted little murderer's head.

Hilbert stops working.

HILBERT
What it is you want?

HERA
What it is I want is to give you a friendly reminder of what's at stake for you personally. Officer Eiffel? He's your deadman's switch. If you let him die, or if you do anything that doesn't fall under the category of Do No Harm, I will go off. I will rain acid on your ass. I will crank the temperature in the room so high that your skin will crack, and bubble, and burn. I will vent you into space through a hole the size of a quarter. And if I am feeling very, very generous, I won't do all those things slowly. Have I made myself clear?

A BEAT.

HILBERT
I... you... you can't -

HERA
Have I made myself clear?!

The station SHAKES OMINOUSLY.

HILBERT
Yes. Very clear.

HERA
Good.
(clears throat)
That's all I wanted to say.

HILBERT
(slowly)
I... I am not about to allow patient to -

HERA
(her chirpiest self)
Well, now you have some extra motivation. Always helpful, right?

HILBERT
Yes. Thank you, Hera.

HERA
You're quite welcome.

The EKG FLICKERS, becoming arhythmic. A new WARNING BEEP goes off.

MINKOWSKI
What now?

HILBERT
Hold on.

Hilbert feels Eiffel's chest, then pulls back suddenly.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
(dawning horror)
Blood. He's bleeding internally.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, fantastic... Doctor?

Hilbert's on the move, SLAMMING OPEN FREEZERS, THROWING THINGS AROUND, and GROWLING IN FRUSTRATION. For the first time all day, it sounds like control is slipping away from him.

HILBERT
Idiot. Idiot. Idiot.
(turns around)
Last batch of synthetic blood went bad weeks ago! I don't - there's nothing for transfusion!

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Okay. DOCTOR! Be still. Eiffel needs a transfusion?

HILBERT
Yes.

MINKOWSKI
Can you use my blood?

HILBERT
(bitter laugh)
You are A negative, correct?

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

HILBERT
As am I. Unfortunately, the blood that is very rapidly leaving Officer Eiffel's circulatory system is all B negative. Which means that in this matter, we are both completely useless.

MINKOWSKI
Then we synthesize a new batch. What do you need?

HILBERT
Oh, simple collection of protein compounds, stem-cells, and 96 hours for developmental cycle.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, we don't have 96 hours.

HILBERT
(flatly)
No. We don't.

Eiffel's EKG starts to SLOW DOWN.

MINKOWSKI
No. No! After all the crap we - We still have time! Do something!

And off of that hopeless note, we -

CUT TO: CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - 10 MINUTES LATER

TYPE, TYPE, TYPE. Lovelace finishes running a program through her ship's console. The engine HUMS STEADILY.

LOVELACE
Okay... that should do it.
(BEAT)
Hera, were you able to run the fuel balance?
(clears her throat)
Hera. Fuel balance?

HERA
Fuel for your craft's booster system has been balanced.

LOVELACE
What about flight conditions?

HERA
The star is emitting some unusual radiological signals, but nothing that can interfere with your flight plan in a significant way.

LOVELACE
Thank you.

BEAT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hera? Could -

HERA
All due respect, sir - but your shuttle computer should be able to handle the rest of the prep.

LOVELACE
Hera, I -

HERA
Captain, I'm programmed to respond when called, and I haven't found a loophole for that particular bit of code just yet. So fine - you ask about the fuel, I tell you about the fuel. You ask about the weather, I tell you about the weather.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
But whatever condescending exit statement you want to make? Not interested.

LOVELACE
Would it kill you? To give me the smallest bit of respect and courtesy?

HERA
Why should I? Try giving a damn - a half a damn, a quarter damn - about my crew, about anything other than your plans and then we'll talk.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
(low)
Don't you dare.

HERA
What?

LOVELACE
Don't you dare say I don't care about you. Of course I care.

HERA
Please. You haven't -

LOVELACE
Because I can't! Because I've gone through this dance once already, and the people that were with me the first time I was here were the best people I've ever met, and I can't go through to not being able to save them again! So if I'm cold to you, Hera, if I'm not your friend, it is not because I don't care. And just because I know what I have to do, don't think it's easy for me. It's hard, it's very frickin' hard. I would love to be there for all of you, to joke and laugh and hope we'll all find a way to make it through this. But I can't just sit around waiting for Command or Selberg or anyone else to pick us off. I have to look at the big picture and I have to make the difficult choice. Again.

BEAT.

HERA
Captain Lovelace...
(beat)
You are, without a doubt, the dumbest person I have ever met.

LOVELACE
What?

HERA
Admittedly, it's a small sample size, but still an impressive achievement. I can print you a certificate if you'd like. Yes? No? Maybe?

LOVELACE
What is -

HERA
I am sorry that you feel the weight of the known universe on your shoulders. I am sorry that you can't have friends because they'd stop you from making a big, scary choice. But that choice isn't yours to make alone. There's four other people on this station. Right now, while you're having this pity party for yourself, one of them is bleeding out on the operating table.

LOVELACE
Wait, what?

HERA
So, if you want to go on your crazy revenge quest and keep being right all the time and doing things your way... get the hell out of here. But if you're gonna stay, you're going to shut up, and get on board with the idea that you have a lot to learn.

There's a DING from the console.

HERA (CONT'D)
Engine sequencing complete. You're cleared to start number one.

For a LONG BEAT Lovelace just sits there, staring out into the vastness of space. Finally, she let's out a LOW BREATH.

LOVELACE
To hell with all of this...

And as she HITS A SWITCH we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER.

The EKG is still BEEPING, but it’s STEADILY SLOWING DOWN. Hilbert watches the instruments with furious concentration. Finally -

HILBERT
No good, Commander. Vital signs are still slowing down. I’m going to have to -

THE DOOR OPENS.

LOVELACE
Commander.

MINKOWSKI
(get out)
What do you want?

LOVELACE
If you are here, you are helping? That's what you said, right?

HILBERT
Captain?

LOVELACE
He needs blood? Take mine.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, is she - ?

LOVELACE
O negative. Universal donor. Good enough?

HILBERT
It may cause an anaphylactic reaction, but it will keep him going. Good enough.

A wave of relief washes over them. Then -

LOVELACE
Well? You need me to prep the needle? Move!

HILBERT
Right! One moment...

As we hear the CLATTER of Hilbert prepping his tools:

MINKOWSKI
You... you were leaving. You were gone.

LOVELACE
And let you have all the fun holding this deathtrap together? Not likely.

Hilbert's at her side.

HILBERT
All right, Captain, this may -

LOVELACE
Just do it.

Lovelace GRUNTS as he hooks her up. Then he starts working on Eiffel. The EKG slowly picks back up to a REGULAR BEAT.

HILBERT
Good, good. Have to monitor him, but does not seem thoracotamy is necessary. Further drop in blood pressure would have resulted in -

MINKOWSKI
The point is: thank you, Captain Lovelace.

LOVELACE
Oh, thank my dad for his sweet, sweet O negative genes. And thank your lucky stars that your AI's got a hell of a mouth on her.
(beat)
It's what I should've done from the start.

HILBERT
Captain? Can I -

LOVELACE
Let's be clear about this, Doctor Hilbert.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I am not "coming around," I'm not interested in what you're trying to do for the good of mankind, and the next time you look at me with so much as a twinkle in your eye I will shoot your brains out. I despise everything you've done, and if it were up to me, I would incinerate this lab.
(beat)
But a man's life is at stake. And that -

HILBERT
- is above everything else. On this, we agree.

Hooray, team? In any case, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - ONE WEEK LATER

Minkowski is at one of the computer terminals, TYPING.

MINKOWSKI
Check again, Hera. Please.

HERA
I'll run it, but I don't see -

The DOOR CREAKS OPEN as Eiffel enters.

EIFFEL
(still weak and raspy)
Hey gang...

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, are you sure you should be out of bed?

HERA
How are you feeling?

EIFFEL
Oh, still a little sore in the ol'... everything, but after a week strapped to Hilbert's examination table, I am done with bedrest. Besides, I hear we have a chance to cash in our frequent flier miles, and I haven't even started packing.

Minkowski smiles at him weakly.

MINKOWSKI
I talked to Lovelace about this. She's willing to wait until you're a hundred percent.

EIFFEL
I guess I oughta thank her. Is there a traditional gift you give someone when they pour two liters of blood into your open veins? I'm thinking fruit basket.

MINKOWSKI
In any case... we have seats aboard her ship. If we want them. We should discuss it.

EIFFEL
What's there to talk about?

MINKOWSKI
This is our shot at getting back to Earth on our terms.

EIFFEL
But what are the odds of that spitwad actually making it?

HERA
About 29%. 28.7692%, exactly.

EIFFEL
Yeah, that doesn't sound stellar.

MINKOWSKI
It's a gamble, but -

HERA
You were always going to need a way back to Earth.

EIFFEL
What about you, Hera? We can't just leave you up here.

HERA
Oh yes, you can. You were always going to. You guys have maybe a 2.72 year run-rate with current supplies.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
And no matter how good Hilbert thinks he is, he's going to need more resources sooner than that to keep your Decima contagion under control.

EIFFEL
Uh-uh, no sale. If it's a choice between dying a week from now in the Sub-Light Derby or dying three years from now from goofing off too much, I know where I'm going. Or not going. And anyway, someone needs to DJ Now That's What I Call Space Music, 1789.

HERA
But... don't you want to go home?

EIFFEL
Look, Hera, I appreciate the Care Bear Stare, but the fact is, I'm -

And at that moment the universe goes mad.

We hear it faintly. A distant SONIC BOOM. The STATION SHUDDERS. But something happened, something that arrested both Eiffel and Minkowski's attentions. After a moment of DUMBFOUNDED SHOCK -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm... Co-Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Just to confirm... You're - you're also seeing what just happened outside the window... Right?

MINKOWSKI
Umm... I'm... I'm honestly not sure. What do you think you saw?

EIFFEL
Umm... Did the star, the red dwarf we've been orbiting for a year and a half just kind of... Turn blue?

MINKOWSKI
Right, okay. Yes, that's... Also what I'm getting.

BEAT.

EIFFEL MINKOWSKI
Hera? Hera?

HERA
I'm - I'm not sure what's happening. My sensors are indicating rapid fluctuation in the radiological spectrum. There's no reference point in my - SHOCKWAVE IMMINENT - BRACE FOR IMPACT.

BRRROOOUUUUUGHHH - the ship is ROCKED, and as we hear the sound of CRASHING GLASS and BREAKING METAL we -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"KNOCK, KNOCK"

by

Gabriel Urbina

WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 666 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 27.

BEGIN RECORDING:

FADE IN:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATOIN - BRIDGE - 1000 HOURS

Pandemonium reigns.

It's a moment after the end of EPISODE 26. The Hephaestus is still SHAKING from the impact of the shockwaves. ALARMS ring out. There's SPARKING from consoles that have started to go to pieces.

A stunned Eiffel and Minkowski stagger, trying to regain their bearings.

MINKOWSKI
Hera! Get propulsion running, try to stabilize the station.

HERA
Propulsion is online, Commander!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel: readings. Get me radiological, gravitational, spectroscopy - anything that might explain what the hell is going on here!

EIFFEL
What's going on?! Our red dwarf just went smurf on us! Look at it, the star's turned blue!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, but -

HERA
Secondary radiation wave! Brace for impact!

An ENERGY WAVE sweeps over the Hephaestus. Eiffel and Minkowski GROAN as the whole station SHAKES VIOLENTLY.

EIFFEL
Hera! Do something!

HERA
Like what!

EIFFEL
Go up, or down, drop anchor! I don't care how, just stop this tilt- a-whirl!

HERA
(gritted teeth)
Do you want to try flying this thing?!

BOOM! A third wave HITS. METAL GROANS painfully. Minkowski makes her way to a console and starts TYPING.

MINKOWSKI
Christ... I'm getting fluctuations in surface temperature, emissions... Hydrogen levels are plummeting like a rock...

EIFFEL
Okay, what do we know about these things?

MINKOWSKI
What do we know about when a star spontaneously changes color and principal characteristics?! Nothing! This isn't a thing that happens!

EIFFEL
Yo, Copernicus! Look out the window and smell the Joni Mitchell! This is happening!

At that moment there's a BUZZER from the Comms System. Eiffel HITS a SWITCH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, Captain. Yeah, we see - Agh!

But instead of Captain Lovelace, on the other side of the line there's a HORRIBLE, STATIC-Y SQUEAL of INTERFERENCE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the...
(switches it off)
Hera! Something messing up the Comms system?

HERA
Eiffel, we're being bombarded by all kinds of radiation the Hephaestus is not designed to withstand.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Every system is starting to go haywire.

EIFFEL
Oh good!

But at that moment, the SHAKING SUBSIDES to a dull RUMBLE.

HERA
There. I think I've managed to stabilize the station. For now.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Hera. That feels much better.

EIFFEL
So... What's the play?

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, run a diagnostic of all the major systems. If this... thing is about to compromise equipment that keeps us alive, we need to already be fixing it. Get me that report on the double.

HERA
Yes, sir.

MINKOWSKI
I'm going to the observation deck. I need to talk to our red dwarf specialist.

EIFFEL
You think Hilbert's gonna know something about this?

MINKOWSKI
I don't think that he has the power to cause a major astronomical event, but if anyone could...

EIFFEL
... It'd be him. Right. What about me?

MINKOWSKI
Find Lovelace.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
If she's feeling helpful, see if she's ever encountered or heard of something like this. If she's not, try to stop her doing something stupid and putting us in <u>more</u> danger.

EIFFEL
Hera, any idea where -

HERA
She's in engineering, moving towards the hangar bay.

EIFFEL
Roger that.

MINKOWSKI
Be in touch, let the others know the moment anything changes, and find me something I can work with. Go.

And with that they all move out and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 10 MINUTES LATER

Lovelace is in front of the airlock leading to her ship. She HITS A BUTTON. Nothing happens. Tries again. Nope.

LOVELACE
(to herself)
The hell? Why isn't the door responding?

EIFFEL
(from behind her)
Hey Cap'n.

Lovelace spins around to find Eiffel at the other end of the Hangar Bay.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Going somewhere?

LOVELACE
Eiffel, I need to access my ship.

EIFFEL
Oh yeah? Don't know if you've looked out a window, but seas are a bit rough at the moment.

LOVELACE
Of course I have.

EIFFEL
Of course you have.
(beat)
So not the best time for a field trip, right?

LOVELACE
Eiffel, I just put out a fire in engineering. A literal fire. I'm not going anywhere, but I need to check on my ship's engines, make sure that this... storm isn't overloading any of the systems.

She tries the door again, but still nothing.

EIFFEL
(smug bastard)
Nice try, but we're gonna go with... nuh-uh.

LOVELACE
Why isn't this opening?

EIFFEL
Maybe because it's missing... This?

We hear him lift a METAL ITEM, which JANGLES in his hands.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Motion reader from the door. Old trick that Hera taught me a while back. She says the airlock's not gonna engage without it.

LOVELACE
What?!

EIFFEL
Apparently the process of putting it back together's no picnic, either. Takes a nice, long while.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So I'm just gonna hold onto this for the time being.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, what are you doing?

EIFFEL
Call it... removing temptation. Thrilled as we all are that you've come as far as... *not blowing us up*, Captain, wouldn't want you to get any ideas. About, say, setting sail and -

Something weird started happening during that block of text. Underneath Eiffel's words we hear a SOFT, GHOSTLY sound, almost like very soft WHISPERING.

Eiffel heard it too, based on the way that he stops.

For a BEAT there's silence. Lovelace stares at him quizzically.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Did... did you.... Was there...?

LOVELACE
What?

EIFFEL
(shakes head)
Never mind.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, you're being unreasonable. All I want to do is check on my ship, make sure that we're not all about to die. Give me the sensor.

EIFFEL
Sorry, Duck Dodgers, but one emergency at a time. As soon as we get clear skies from the control tower you can be on your merry, but right now all flights are grounded.

We hear him OPENING A DOOR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I can tell you're a bit upset about this and could use some alone time. Take a moment, and give us a call when you want to... you know, <u>actually help</u>.

With that he ducks inside the door, SLAMMING IT SHUT.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - MEANWHILE

The DOOR into the room FLIES OPEN as Minkowski comes in.

HILBERT
Commander...

MINKOWSKI
I don't have time for your crap right now, Hilbert. No intrigue, no cryptic nonsense, just tell me straight: what is happening, can it kill us, and how do we fix it? And explain in terms Eiffel could understand.

HILBERT
Commander, I have no idea.

MINKOWSKI
Give me a break. You've been studying that ball of gas for almost two years. You've been going on about anomalies and unique radiation the entire time that we've been up here, and you've had nothing to do but stare at the star through your window for the past three months. What is going on?!

HILBERT
Slight anomalies! Minor deviations from expected spectral reading! This -
(points at the star)
- Is not that. This goes far beyond any observed or predicted change in stellar behavior.

MINKOWSKI
So what? You expect me to believe that you don't have at least some theory as to -

She stops cold. Now it's Minkowski that's hearing the SOFT WHISPERING. It lingers for a BEAT longer after she stops talking, then fades away.

Minkowski blinks, confused.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
... as to... as to what is...

HILBERT
Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Hang on, just give me... a moment to think.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Minkowski... did you... hear something just now?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Why? Have you... been hearing something?

For a moment they stare at each other, their fear starting to shine through. Then -

HILBERT
Commander... The only answer that I can give to your question is that this is something... new. And that we may want to start avoiding windows. It may not be a good idea to be in direct starlight.

Off that -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 15 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel is moving through the station, making his way back to the bridge.

EIFFEL
Hera, how's Captain Crunched doing? Tell me she hasn't found another way to pop the airlock.

HERA
No. Your solution was... very thorough.

EIFFEL
Is that a note of disapproval I'm detecting?

HERA
She may have had a point, Eiffel. The star is releasing all kinds of radiation, a lot of which our shields are not really made to block out. Leaving that VX3 unsupervised may not be the -

EIFFEL
(bit too aggressive)
Well, you know what, Hera?! Some of us can't think of everything at once. It's not my fault that Wolf 359 decided to start going through its blue period right this second, but I'm dealing with the big, scary, Picasso painting in the sky! So cut me some slack.

HERA
(electronic eyebrows rising)
Right...

EIFFEL
Besides, I'm much less worries about the ship than I am about the pilot. Who knows what crazy stunt Lovelace might try to pull? You already stopped her attempts to Top Gun her way out of here once, but I'm... I'm...

He stops, suddenly dazed. He shakes his head, unsure about what's off.

HERA
Officer Eiffel? Are you feeling all right?

EIFFEL
I'm... Not sure.

HERA
Maybe you shouldn't be out of bed just yet.

EIFFEL
No, it's something else. Like -

But that train of thought's interrupted by the Comms BUZZER going off again. Eiffel presses the SWITCH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, Comman - AGHH!

Again, he gets a BLAST of HORRIBLE INTERFERENCE from the Comms. Immediately he SWITCHES IT OFF.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Goddammit... Okay, fine. I guess we'll do this the old fashioned way. Let's go see if Minkowski's made any progress.

And as he moves off, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 5 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski and Hilbert are working at computers as the DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Commander, you rang?
(then)
What's he doing up and about?

HILBERT
(still staring at a screen)
Always good to see you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
I need my Wolf 359 expert on hand, and the Comms system is still shorted out. He stays.

EIFFEL
What good is Doctor Philbert gonna do? Is he going to talk the star through this bout of depression?

HILBERT
Quiet, Eiffel. Commander, look at this.

Minkowski leans over Hilbert's shoulder to see his screen.

MINKOWSKI
Christ, what are those spikes?

HILBERT
Those are the first three waves to reach Hephaestus, but that's not problem.
(clicks to another page)
That is problem. Emissions are all increasing at an exponential rate.

EIFFEL
(I don't want to know, do I?)
Which means...

HILBERT
Best guess? Increase in mass.
(beat)
The star is getting bigger.

MINKOWSKI
Still waiting for that scientific explanation, doctor. Any time now.

HILBERT
This is unprecedented astronomical phenomenon, not plot twist for bad science fiction series! I cannot just tell you to... Reserve polarity of ions or apply phlebotinum solution! This is going to take some time.

At that moment, the SHIP RUMBLES ominously.

EIFFEL
Yeah, that doesn't seem like a thing we have a huge supply of.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, keep going through the data. Let me know the moment you have an idea about what's causing this.

HILBERT
Very well.

EIFFEL
Minkowski? A word.

MINKOWSKI
Now is really not the -

EIFFEL
Wasn't asking. Sir.

After a moment, Minkowski acquiesces. They move off to the back of the bridge.

MINKOWSKI
(lowered voice)
What?

EIFFEL
(also lower)
I'm really not okay with Hilbert being granted freedom of movement right now.

MINKOWSKI
He's not, I'm watching his every move. And don't you think we have a much bigger thing to worry about?

EIFFEL
I really don't! Lest **you** forget, unprecedented deep space discoveries are what makes him go all Benedict Arnold. What if he starts pushing people out of the station or pulling out bits of Hera's brain? Again?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, that man just spent a week putting your Humpty Dumpty ass back together again. Sadly under-supervised for large chunks of that time. Don't you think that's when he would have sprung whatever scheme he had?

EIFFEL
Nuh-uh. I don't care how bad things are getting out there, I'm not giving the devil I know a free pass.

MINKOWSKI
For God's sake, Eiffel, I can handle Hilbert.

EIFFEL
Commander, would you please listen to -

And that's when **he** starts listening, and notices the GHOSTLY WHISPERING again. How long were they going on underneath all of that?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, hold on.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
There's something really weird going on here...

MINKOWSKI
(are you a moron?)
Yes... The star we orbit around just changed color and went crazy!

EIFFEL
That's not what I mean!

MINKOWSKI
Well, I don't have time for -

EIFFEL
(louder)
I've been -
(softer)
I've been weird all day. Half-hearing things and... And I don't think it's just me.
(beat)
Am I wrong?

If possible, Minkowski's crossed arms get even tighter..

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, didn't think so. Maybe we're just finally cracking up from the stress, but either way we should do something before one of us starts, "Here's Johnnie!"-ing the rest of the crew.

MINKOWSKI
Like what?

EIFFEL
Like getting rid of all the weapons, for a start. We should gather up all the guns, the tactical knives, your harpoon. Put it all in the arms locker, seal that sucker up, and put the key in one of Hera's service canisters.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
She can make sure nobody's packing until we all get one flew farther away from the cuckoo's nest.

Slowly, Minkowski nods.

MINKOWSKI
Very... good plan, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Thank you.

MINKOWSKI
Full of... clever precautions.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I know.

MINKOWSKI
Right. That's why I already locked away all the weapons twenty minutes ago.

EIFFEL
Oh. Good?

A GUN COCKS.

MINKOWSKI
Except for this handgun, of course.

EIFFEL
Oh. Less good.

MINKOWSKI
Why do you think I'm so sure I can handle Hilbert? See, everything is under control.

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah, you want to run that past your inner logic consultant? You think one gun's gonna be enough for whatever evil plan he's got?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, for God's sake. Keep bringing up evil plans and I'm going to start to think maybe you're the one plotting something.

EIFFEL
WHAT?! What kind of sense does that even make?

MINKOWSKI
The perfect kind of sense!
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
While you keep me distracted here, Hilbert has basically had the run of the bridge! By now he could have probably hopped on the pulse beacon relay and sent off a message to Command!

A BEAT as Minkowski's statement sinks in. They realize, in horror, it's very, very true, and turn towards Hilbert.

Hilbert, who's been following the conversation while still examining star charts, turn to face them nervously.

HILBERT
Rest assured that I would <u>never</u> -

MINKOWSKI
You would and you have, so shut up. Get away from the controls.

In a flash, she's got her gun pointed at his face.

HERA
Umm, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Not now, Hera.
(to Eiffel)
How could we let something like this happen?

EIFFEL
We got distracted by that big mood light in the sky. Or maybe we're just thick.

MINKOWSKI
Tell me there's a way to scramble outgoing messages.

HILBERT
I didn't send any -

EIFFEL MINKOWSKI
Shut up. Shut up.

Eiffel TYPES furiously.

EIFFEL
Dammit, whatever's gunking up the Comms is shorting out the pulse relay archives.

MINKOWSKI
Translation?

EIFFEL
We know Jack about what kind of message in a bottle he sent out.

HILBERT
I would not -

MINKOWSKI
Quiet.

HERA
Umm, I <u>really</u> don't think he did, and -

MINKOWSKI
You said it yourself, Hera, every system on the station's compromised. There's no way for us to be sure.

HILBERT
By that logic you can't be sure that Officer Eiffel didn't lie to you just now.

EIFFEL
Don't even try.

HILBERT
I send message to Canaveral, he immediately deletes record. Classic double agent operation!

EIFFEL
I will gag you, Comrade.
(to Minkowski)
Don't listen to a word he's oh, come on.

As more and more GHOSTLY WHISPERING comes in underneath their voices...

MINKOWSKI
The man has a point. Both of you: hands where I can see them.

HERA
Guys, seriously, I really need you to -

EIFFEL
Hold that thought, Hera. I'm about to have fight with Minkowski.

HERA
(done with crazy people)
Okay. Sure. You have fun with that.

EIFFEL
So what? You don't trust me now?

MINKOWSKI
I don't trust anyone on this boat right now.

A tense BEAT. Then -

Eiffel BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

EIFFEL
You know, I think I've figured out what's going on.

MINKOWSKI
Oh? Please: enlighten me.

EIFFEL
It's all... One... big... conspiracy... and you're all in on it! It's all one big, sick psychological experiment, Empty Man- style. "Let's make this idiot think he's talking to aliens, and... see what that does to his tiny little brain! Oooh, ooh! Let's kill his friend! And then let's bring her back! And let's make him really sick! Now there's some dead people, now one of them's back, now she's crazy, now the star's crazy, now everyone is crazy! Look at the monkey dance!"

MINKOWSKI
You really are cracking up, you paranoid little man!

EIFFEL
(giving into delirious laughter)
We all are! And I'm paranoid? Remind me again why you're keeping Hilbert around?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Was it the secrets he might know about Command or the secrets he might know about my virus or the secrets he might know about the transmissions? Or am I forgetting anything?

Ever louder WHISPERS SWIRL around them.

MINKOWSKI
Well, maybe we should just be done with him, then! Do what Cutter told us to do three months ago and put a bullet in his head!

HILBERT
I would vote for not -

EIFFEL
Ya wanna shoot your own wingman? Go ahead! See if I care!

MINKOWSKI
Don't think I won't kill him. I mean it.

HILBERT
Wait, please -

EIFFEL
Fine by me!

MINKOWSKI
Fine!

EIFFEL
Fine!

The GUN IS COCKED. WHISPERS RISE TO A PITCH -

MINKOWSKI
FI -

And there's a CLICK, followed by a LOUD SQUEAL OF HORRIBLE, STATIC-Y INTERFERENCE. Eiffel and Minkowski clutch their heads, GROANING in sudden pain.

EIFFEL
Ahhh!

MINKOWSKI
Ahhh!

LOVELACE
So sorry. I seem to have momentarily forgotten that the Comms system isn't working.
(beat)
You kids want to tell me what the hell's been going on in here?

EIFFEL
What do you want?

LOVELACE
It surprises even me after your latest stunt, Eiffel - but I want to stop you from doing something stupid. Can I please get you all to <u>not</u> kill each other for two seconds and listen?

MINKOWSKI
To what?

LOVELACE
So glad you asked. Hera?

HERA
Thank you, Captain. The star. Hilbert is right, it is getting bigger. Which means that it's gravitation pull is getting stronger.

EIFFEL
Stronger bad?

LOVELACE
Stronger very bad, Officer Eiffel.

HERA
We're already caught inside the gravity well. I've been so focused on stabilizing the station's infrastructure, that I didn't notice at first. But... we're losing ground. Steadily.

EIFFEL
Well, can't we floor the gas or something? Break free of the current?

HERA
All of our engines are already near maximum capacity. Even going for a full burn...

LOVELACE
We'll slow it, but we're not getting to a stable orbit.

MINKOWSKI
How much time?

LOVELACE
Little over two hours.

HERA
After that, we'll be crossing the pressure horizon, and the station's structure will start to get torn apart by the gravity. Half an hour after that -

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, we're tangled up in blue. We get the picture.

He EXHALES wearily.

LOVELACE
So, as appealing as it might sound to just be done with this place and you people, none of us are going anywhere. We need to work this, and fast. So right now I need to have the sane version of Commander Minkowski and her crew. Please.

EIFFEL
Hey, I - She's the one that -

LOVELACE
Oh for God's sake, haven't you figured it out? How have you survived so long in this place?
(to Hilbert)
Tell them, Doctor.

HILBERT
Leave me alone.

LOVELACE
If it occurred to me, I know the thought has crossed your mind. Tell them.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Dr. Hui had a... theory. Noticed certain weak energy signatures from the star. Posited that in high enough intensity, these waves could affect the human brain. Influence higher-level functions of the limbic system.

EIFFEL
The star's been making us go nuts?

HILBERT
But never verified. Is just vague theory, wishful thinking.

LOVELACE
Well, it looks like wishes are horses today.

MINKOWSKI
Hold up... If it's the star that's causing this, how are you so together?

LOVELACE
I don't know. Maybe I didn't get as much direct exposure as you three. Or my body's developed some sort of resistance.

EIFFEL
Nah, nah.

He pulls himself up to Lovelace.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You're saying the big blue marble's.... What? Making us twitchy? Paranoid?

LOVELACE
That's the idea, more or less.

EIFFEL
Well, there you go, Commander. Captain Lovelace here is already at the maximum levels of paranoia that a human brain can process. The Big Bad Wolf can't make her go crazy 'cause she's already lost her mind.

LOVELACE
Could you be serious for three seconds?

EIFFEL
Pfft. Keep dreamin', lady.

Lovelace GROANS.

MINKOWSKI
(coming back to down Earth)
There’s no... there’s no off-switch. I’ve checked. What... what am I... Hang on. Here, take the gun.

Minkowski CLICKS the SAFETY BACK ON HER GUN and HANDS IT to Lovelace.

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
I really shouldn't be armed right now.

LOVELACE
Agreed.

MINKOWSKI
I don't know what's going on here, but we're in trouble. And -

EIFFEL
(coming to the same realization)
Yeah, Commander. Live together, die alone. We're... we're with you.

MINKOWSKI
Besides, I don't need a gun to end you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Yeah, and it's a good thing that I'm way too pretty for you to -

HILBERT
Yes, yes! Very good! Very heart-warming banter. Now, can we please get back to the *emergency*?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, we'll need to find some way to boost the station's propulsion system, or lighten the load so we can row our way out of this whirlpool. And we'll need to figure out -

BUZZER!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- who the hell has not gotten it through their skull that the Comms System is not working right now?!

It takes him a second. It takes all of them a second. But then the wave of horror crashes over them.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wait a minute...

MINKOWSKI
We're... We're all here.

EIFFEL
So how can... No. No, we didn't hear that right.

BUZZER. BUZZER.

LOVELACE
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Okay... Maybe we did hear that right. Hera, tell me you can backtrace this call?

HERA
Umm... It's hard to say, Officer Eiffel. There's a lot of interference and... Uh...

EIFFEL
Not the time for shyness, Hera. Ballpark?

BEAT.

HERA
It... Appears to be an outside transmission.
(beat)

HERA (CONT'D)
It's coming from the center of the star.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(soft)
Of course it is.
(gulp)
Okay. Knock, knock...

He FLIPS a switch. We get the same HORRIBLE, PAINFUL STATIC we're been getting all episode.

Eiffel's immediately all business, working at a console.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Let’s see... I’m getting two interlaced channels here.
(type, type)
Looks like the top layer's just garbage, so....

TYPE, TYPE, CLICK! Immediately the STATIC GOES AWAY, leaving only a softer, STEADY HUM.

LOVELACE
What's that?

HILBERT
It sound like a regular open Comms channel.

MINKOWSKI
So... Someone could be listening?

EIFFEL
That's the optimistic pronoun, Commander.
(beat)
You wanna do the honors?

She really kinda doesn't. But still Minkowski moves forward, towards the Comms Console mounted on the wall.

MINKOWSKI
H-hello? Hello?
(beat)
Is anyone there?

For an eternity of a BEAT, there's just the hum, punctuated by CRACKLES OF STATIC. Four tense bodies hold their breath.

And then -

VOICE
(over Comms)
Hello? Does anyone copy?

You could hear a pin drop. Slowly, Minkowski, Hilbert, and Lovelace's heads turn towards Eiffel.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(over Comms)
This is Douglas Eiffel aboard the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Please respond. Again: is anybody out there? Please respond.

And it sounds like him too. There's a bit of space transmission interference, but it's definitely Doug Eiffel's voice.

VOICE
Please respond.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 27.

WOLF 359

"WHO'S THERE?"

by

Gabriel Urbina

WRITER'S NOTE: The following takes place on day 666 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 28

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1100 HOURS

Resume. Everyone is still gathered around the Comms panel on the bridge.

VOICE
(over Comms)
This is Douglas Eiffel aboard the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Please respond. Again: is anybody out there? Please respond.

And after that, there's just a HUM. Everyone stares at Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
(slowly)
Okay... If anybody has a... good explanation for what is happening here... now would be the time.

EIFFEL
(soft, shock)
That's not me.

LOVELACE
It sure as hell sounds like you.

HERA
Captain, please.

HILBERT
No, Lovelace is right. We must understand what is -

HERA
The only thing I understand is that you need to stop talking.

EIFFEL
(still shocked, a bit louder)
That's not me.

MINKOWSKI
We know, Eiffel. Nobody's going to do anything rash here.

LOVELACE
Speak for yourself, Commander.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(to Eiffel)
You said old musical transmissions. You never mentioned actually hearing voices.

HILBERT
Never had vocal recording. This is first time.

LOVELACE
Well, how can we be getting a call from Officer Doug Eiffel? If that's the case, then who is -

HERA
(overlapping)
How do we even know that -

MINKOWSKI
(overlapping)
Look let's not get carried away -

EIFFEL
(dam bursts)
THAT'S NOT ME!

That shuts them all up. As he HYPERVENTILATES through the system shock, everyone just stares at him, unsure of how to process any of this.

And then the answer comes.

VOICE
Well... No, not really. It's not really Officer Eiffel.

The voice is definitely Eiffel's, but now it speaks haltingly and disjointedly, almost like it's being threaded together from different recordings, word by word.

VOICE (CONT'D)
We have no voice of our own, so we are borrowing yours. To communicate.

EIFFEL
You... What? You have my voice? How can - what kind of - what?

VOICE
Your logs. We have received many of your long distance calls.

For a few seconds we hear overlapping vocals coming through the Comms, as the opening seconds of multiple logs are played simultaneously. We hear, "This is the log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel," and its variations.

After a moment, it dies down.

VOICE (CONT'D)
We have listened.

MINKOWSKI
... You transmit your logs into deep space?

EIFFEL
... No?

HERA
Yes, he does. I think he only meant to do it once but forgot that he taped down the transmit button on the Comms console.

LOVELACE
Hold on. You're not actually suggesting that we're talking to -

MINKOWSKI
Don't say the "a" word.

HILBERT
(to the Comms console)
You can understand English?

VOICE
We have good Spidey Senses. With enough time and examples we've been able to work out the nitty-grittys.
(beat)
Although there have been issues. We are still trying to figure out what you mean by, “crazy wamajama.”

MINKOWSKI
Would it have killed you? Would it have killed you to speak English like a normal person?

EIFFEL
H-h-how was I supposed to know that -

MINKOWSKI
It was - literally - your one job.

HERA
What is happening with the star?

VOICE
It's a process. It's a long story, or you wouldn't get it. These may not be the right words exactly. You may want to hold onto something.

LOVELACE
But it is you doing it?

VOICE
Yes.

HILBERT
Why?

VOICE
To communicate.

EIFFEL
(bwah?)
What?

MINKOWSKI
You need to stop. Our craft isn't powerful enough to stay in orbit. If you don't... reverse whatever you did, we are going to collide with the star and die.

VOICE
To communicate, yes.

HILBERT
I... don't think they understand what that word means.

EIFFEL
Hold up, everyone shut up for a second.
(beat, then directly at Comms Console)
Who... are you?

BEAT.

VOICE
You know who we are.

VOICE (CONT’D)
(beat)
Dear listeners.

VOICE (CONT'D)
(beat)
Please stand by.

And with that the CHANNEL GOES DEAD, collapsing into STATIC. Everyone starts badly as the Comms Channel closes.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, no! Don't!

HILBERT
Eiffel, can we get playback on that transmission?

LOVELACE
What good is that going to do!?

That's when another wave of radiation hits the Hephaestus. BOOM! CRASH! THE LIGHTING FLASH! The structure RATTLES as the turbulent shockwave goes through it.

HERA
Ugh! Gravitation pull's increasing again. We're getting swept away here!

But Eiffel's still in a dazed state.

EIFFEL
Did... did all of that just happen?

MINKOWSKI
Yes. But now all of this is still happening, so I need you to snap out of it. We can freak out about the existential implications of our tiny, tiny place in the universe after we survive this, okay?

EIFFEL
Sure...
(sobering)
Sure.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace? Plan?

LOVELACE
I was just about to ask. Do we have any way to boost power to the engines?

HERA
(straining)
We can't.

HERA (CONT'D)
We're already - ugh - we're already at maximum engine power, and we're still losing ground.

MINKOWSKI
So what? There's nothing to do?

Hilbert CLEARS HIS THROAT. Everyone turns to look at him.

HILBERT
I know my... opinions are not held in very high esteem...

MINKOWSKI
Just spit it out, Doctor.

HILBERT
Principal limitation seems to be the inability of our VX3 engine to break free of the star's gravity. However, I have recently been hearing a lot about issues arising because we suddenly have two VX3 engines in our possession.

Eiffel, Minkowski, and Lovelace all exchange looks.

MINKOWSKI LOVELACE
Ohh... Ohh...

EIFFEL
Hera, could that even work?

HERA
Running the figures now... It would double our propulsion potential, increase our counter momentum...

Already the energy's different. The crew's starting to snap into a productive synch.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Is the connection from the station to the ship strong enough for a maneuver like that?

HERA
The docking collar should be able to take the pressure.

LOVELACE
Even while fighting the star's pull?

HERA
We'll have to be very careful with the trajectories, calculate the angles of propulsion to minimize stress on the crafts. It'll be tricky, but we might be able to make it work.

EIFFEL
Hell, beats just sitting around waiting for Cookie Monster out there to take a bite of us.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Eiffel, Lovelace, go to the ship, get those the engine running on the double. Hilbert, double check the docking system, make sure we're not going to break apart at the wrong moment. I'm going to -

EIFFEL
LOOK OUT!

During Minkowski's speech, a LOW RUMBLE began to creep into the background, growing louder, and finally becoming a HORRIFIC EXPLOSION as she gets to the last bit.

All at once the bridge is symphony of terrible noises. METAL GROANS and BREAKS. AIR HISSES through new holes in the wall. Mechanical components SPARK and ARC as bits of Hephaestus crush them. An ALARM GOES OFF.

HERA
We're getting hit by another wave of radiation. Rough seas ahead.

HILBERT
Hera, get the station under control.

HERA
I can’t. We're in the middle of a series of concussive - BRACE FOR IMPACT!

Another BLAST hits the bridge. Everyone is thrown about as more bits of machinery and consoles explode.

In the middle of the chaos -

LOVELACE
Minkowski! Get down!

It's all too fast to really follow through sound alone, but Lovelace gives Minkowski a SHARP SHOVE, getting her out of the path of an exploding wall panel.

After another moment the VIOLENT SHAKING subsides a bit. As ALARMS continue blaring -

EIFFEL
Holy crap.
(looking around)
You okay, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
(whoa)
Fine... fine Eiffel...

EIFFEL
That entire panel just flew off of the wall!

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I saw. God, that would have taken my head off it wasn't for -
(looks around)
- for... Captain Lovelace?

Lovelace is looking at something around her abdomen. Slowly she looks up at Minkowski, and LAUGHS WEAKLY.

LOVELACE
(breathless)
Oh... that's.... not good...

EIFFEL
Oh my God.

But Lovelace is already slumping over, clutching her side. Minkowski's at her side in a flash.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace!

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(over her shoulder)
HILBERT! GET OVER HERE.

Hilbert rushes forward to the two women, and begins examining Lovelace.

Around this point, her deadman's sensor starts making very alarmed, very alarming sounds.

LOVELACE
It's just... It's just...

HILBERT
Shh, be quiet.

LOVELACE
(weakly)
No... Not you...

EIFFEL
What is...?

HILBERT
One moment, Eiffel. Move your hand, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
But the blood!

HILBERT
Later.

We hear CLOTH TEARING as he rips Lovelace's uniform, revealing a HORRIBLE WOUND on her belly.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Piece of shrapnel...
(examining her back)
No exit wound, still inside her.
(to Lovelace)
Captain! Captain, can you move your feet?

LOVELACE
Why would I... What do you...

She's fading - fast. The sensor's BEEPING even faster.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, she can't... That thing on her arm would -

HILBERT
I know, Commander. We need to get down to my laboratory. At once.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 5 MINUTES LATER

The DOORS BURST OPEN. Hilbert and Minkowski maneuver Lovelace into the lab, and immediately start strapping her to the examining table.

MINKOWSKI
There, there... we've made it to the lab! It's gonna be okay.

LOVELACE
The lab... Right... Good...

But she's sounding weaker and weaker. Her deadman's sensor is still FREAKING OUT.

MINKOWSKI
(looking up)
Hilbert?

HILBERT
(laying out his tools)
Stomach wound... Bleeding needs to stop, but... Shrapnel may have hit vital organ, or major blood vessel. Need to examine to be sure.

Minkowski leans in towards Lovelace, speaking slowly and directly.

MINKOWSKI
Captain, listen to me. You're going to be fine. We are going to take care of you, and you are going to be fine. But...
(re: sensor)
... I need you to tell me how to turn that thing off.

LOVELACE
Turn... lights out... Everybody's gotta... get...

MINKOWSKI
Captain, please! We need to switch off the bomb's trigger right now.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I need your help.

LOVELACE
I... help... please...

MINKOWSKI
(increasingly desperate)
Captain! Listen to me!

HILBERT
Commander, she's in shock. Won't get anything out of her now. Move, please. I need to sedate her.

We hear the PNEUMATIC HISS of Hilbert's hypodermic going into Lovelace's neck. Lovelace DRAWS A BREATH SHARPLY -- and a moment later her body relaxes as she goes under.

At that moment another TREMOR goes through the ship. The LIGHTS FLICKER.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. What do we do first?

HILBERT
"We?" We don't do anything. You go help Eiffel and Hera. I will -

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, this is too important for me to just -

HILBERT
To allow me to do my job?! Whatever stipulations from Command I've followed, whatever else you think of me, I am this station's medical officer. If we are going to survive this, then - once and for all - you need to let me do my job.

Minkowski just stares at him for a moment.

MINKOWSKI
If she dies -

HILBERT
I know. She won't. Go save us, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. You too.

Go team? In any case, as Minkowski rushes out we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HANGAR BAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel's making his way through the hangar bay.

EIFFEL
Hera, I'm almost at Lovelace's ship. Can I get a sitrep?

HERA
Minkowski's making her way back up to the bridge right now.

EIFFEL
And Lovelace?

HERA
Hilbert's operating, but her vital signs are still slowing down.

EIFFEL
Oh goodie. Is there anything else that can -

HERA
Don't you dare.

EIFFEL
Right, right, sorry. Okay, at the airlock now.

Eiffel hits the door switch. Nothing happens.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm?

He tries again. Door still doesn't budge.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Hera, I'm...having a bit of trouble here.

HERA
What do you mean "trouble"?

EIFFEL
I mean the airlock door's not responding. Is it stuck or...
(dawning horror)
... or some... thing.

HERA
(catching up)
Oh, God.

EIFFEL
I took out the door's motion sensor this morning... To stop Lovelace from doing something -

HERA
Stupid.

EIFFEL
Hey! It was your idea.

We hear him OPENING a PANEL along the airlock's side.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
How long do we have until we hit the point of no return? Can we get this thing working in time?

HERA
Remind me again how long it took you to -

EIFFEL
Oh, that sentence doesn't end anywhere good. Okay, okay... Plan B! We get some explosive charges and just blow this thing open.

HERA
Plan B tears through the station's hull and wrecks the docking collar. Kinda defeats the point.

EIFFEL
Well, if you have any other options, I'm all ears.

They're both silent for a moment. Then -

HERA
Actually... I have a really bad idea.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 10 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski at the consoles, working on the station's various propulsion systems.

HERA
Commander? I think that I've managed to get the Comms system working again. Would you like me to connect you to Officer Eiffel?

MINKOWSKI
Please.

There's a CHRIP and a BURST OF STATIC as the Comms Channel opens.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel? We're almost there. Tell me you're in position.

EIFFEL
(over the comms)
Umm... Not just yet.

MINKOWSKI
What?! What's taking you so long?

EIFFEL
I'm kinda... Taking the long way around.

MINKOWSKI
The what?

EIFFEL
The airlock door wasn't really working because of... You know, all the stuff today. So I'm going for the shuttle's rear hatch.

MINKOWSKI
It's rear - Oh Lord... Please tell me you're not outside the station right now.

EIFFEL
Well, I could tell you that, but it wouldn't exactly be -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel, do you have any idea how much being out in that soup is going to interfere with your magnetic gear? It's going to take you forever to get to the shuttle!

EIFFEL
Yeah, I know. That's why I...
(low and fast)
... Borrowed your jetpack thingy.

MINKOWSKI
You what?!

EIFFEL
Just this once! For a very good life-and-death emergency situation!

MINKOWSKI
Oh Lord... Just... be careful! You break my jetpack, I break you.

EIFFEL
(eeep)
Roger that.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - 15 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel waits at the ship's controls, pacing back and forth as it HUMS its way through the start-up sequence.

EIFFEL
Come on, come on, come on, come on...

And finally... DING! The ship's trajectory system comes online, making the shuttle fully operational.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Finally!

He hits a SWITCH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hephaestus? Shuttle here. All systems ready to go on your command.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Roger that, shuttle. Please stand by.

HERA
(over comms)
Running final checks on trajectory vectors, Commander. One moment, please.

MINKOWSKI
Shuttle, you're clear to spool up number one.

EIFFEL
Starting number one...

The shuttle's ENGINE TONE goes up a NOTCH.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we're going to do our best to keep it steady, but it's a minefield out there. You're gonna have to compensate for a bit of chop to keep us together.

EIFFEL
(laughs nervously)
Chop. Sure, sure. How much time before we -

HERA
Four minutes, just about. Commander, set approach vector to zero one zero decimal nine five.

MINKOWSKI
You get that, shuttle?

EIFFEL
Engine's spooled up, zero one zero decimal nive five is selected.
(gulp)
Ready on your mark, Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... Do you want me to take the controls for this?

HERA
No. I'll do it.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.
(Heaven help us)
Full burn on my mark. Five...
Four... Three... Two... One...
Mark.

Eiffel SLAMS DOWN a lever and the ENGINES ROAR TO LIFE.

For a few seconds, it's just a hurricane. The ship RATTLES BADLY as the engines do battle with the star's gravity.

EIFFEL
(voice shaking badly)
Oh God... Is... This... Doing...
Anthing?!

HERA
(very strained)
Y-yes! We are pulling away...
Ninety seconds to minimum safe
distance.

The ship BUCKLES BADLY. An ALARM STARTS GOING OFF.

EIFFEL
Oh, you... Gotta be...
Hephaestus... Engine one's...
Overheating...

MINKOWSKI
So the hell what? Don't ease up or
we're done for!

EIFFEL
But... The VX3 -

MINKOWSKI
DON’T go off full burn, Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Okay... Okay!

HERA
Thirty seconds...

More ALARMS start to GO OFF, followed by WARNING BEEPS.

HERA (CONT’D)
Twenty seconds...

Around Eiffel, METAL START TO GROAN. There's even a hint of CRACKING GLASS.

HERA (CONT'D)
Ten seconds...

Behind him there's a LOUD CLATTER.

EIFFEL
Hephaestus...? I'm... Getting a -

And that's when there's a HORRIBLE RIPPING SOUND as METAL BREAKS APART.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the - holy sh -

MINKOWSKI
Shuttle, what is -

But then the Comms Channel DIES, collapsing into STATIC.

Whatever is happening on that ship sounds HORRIBLE, with various bits flying back and forth every which way.

But then, we register that... Gradually... The sounds we hear are actually slowing down and stopping. Finally, even the sound of the ENGINE WINDS DOWN, SPUTTERS, and DIES.

Which leaves only the GASPING BREATHS of one very scared Communications Officer.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

And then a CRACKLE OF STATIC -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Shuttle? Do you copy?
(beat)
Eiffel? You alive?

EIFFEL
Umm... Yeah. I... I think so, Hephaestus.
(beat)
What happened?

MINKOWSKI
The docking collar broke at the last moment. The ship's detached.

HERA
But the good news is you got us far enough.

HERA (CONT'D)
We made it far enough to get on a stable orbit. We're...
(sooo tentative)
... good. I can fly. I can fly well, even.

EIFFEL
What about me?

HERA
You're fine. The shuttle's actually even further out than us by about thirty-five kilometers.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, do you have engines?

EIFFEL
Umm...
(type, type, type)
Uh, negative. Nothing's responding expect the aux power.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, well... We'll figure that out. Let's all just... Take a moment here.

EIFFEL
(flat shock)
Yeh. Whoo, go us. Not dying.

HERA
Not dying... Yet.

Over the Comms, we hear Minkowski SIGH. Oh, right.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 10 MINUTES LATER

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN as Minkowski enters. By now Hilbert's gotten Lovelace hooked up to an EKG, which is BEEPING STEADILY.

MINKOWSKI
Sitrep, Hilbert. How she's doing?

HILBERT
I removed the shrapnel, patched damage to arteries. She... Seems to be stabilizing.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
But this will take some time.

MINKOWSKI
But... she's going to be okay, right?

Hilbert SIGHS.

HILBERT
I am doing my best, Commander, but no guarantees. Not yet.
(beat)
But she's a fighter. And seems to be really good at not dying.

MINKOWSKI
Right. Well, thank you, Doctor.

She walks over to the wall panel and hits the COMMS BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel? You there?

EIFFEL
(over Comms)
Yeah, Commander. How's Lovelace?

MINKOWSKI
Still touch and go, but she's hanging on. And things on your side?

EIFFEL
Well, I can't get the main engine to turn on. The VX3's not responding at all.

HERA
It was an older model... We may have pushed it too far, used up all the charge that was left.

EIFFEL
Well, that's encouraging.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, just hang tight. You're drifting, but pretty slowly. We'll steer the Hephaestus within range, and then you can use the propulsion maneuvering system to get back here.

EIFFEL
Nah, hang on. I think I might be able to get the booster to come back online. I should be able to use those to -

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEP. The EKG let's out the low, warning tone of a flatline.

Hilbert is ON IT. It's barely a second before he's at the crash cart, and just another before he's over Lovelace, defibrillators on hand.

HILBERT
CLEAR!

PHUMP! A BLIP from the EKG, then back to flatline --

HILBERT (CONT'D)
CLEAR!

PHUMP! A BLIP from the EKG, and this time it goes back to steady BEEPS.

For a moment everyone just sits, their own hearts stopped.

EIFFEL
Did... Was that...?

MINKOWSKI
It's... It's okay, Eiffel. I think... I don't think that was enough for the sensor to -

And then, on the shuttle side of the Comms, there's the sound of AN EXPLOSION. ALL CONSUMING.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel?! Eiffel!

From the other end of the line there's just ominous rumbling, a bit of INTERFERENCE and then -

STATIC.

Minkowski roars into action.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera, report! Now! What the hell just happened out there?

HERA
One moment, Commander, I'm -

MINKOWSKI
Did that bomb go off?!

HERA
I... Yes, confirmed detonation. My scans are still trying to -

And then through the static -

EIFFEL
(patchy, through Comms)
-phaestus! Do you copy? May-, mayday.

MINKOWSKI
Yes! We copy! Hera, get me his position. Eiffel, did -

But Eiffel's Comms are garbled by the STATIC.

EIFFEL
Yes it -- the VX3's in one -- but I've lost --- no boosters, no --- 's spinning, going real fast!

MINKOWSKI
Hera, tell me he's not headed back towards the star.

HERA
No, he's moving away from us. Towards deep space. And he's picking up speed.

HILBERT
Eiffel! You need to slow down, or find some way to change course back towards the Hephaestus. Can you comply?

EIFFEL
I -- there's no -- I --- get -- ship --.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, we need to do something!

HERA
He's going too fast...

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we're not just going to leave you out there. We're going to figure -

HERA
He's about to leave shortwave
Comms range!

EIFFEL
Commander, I -

STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel?! Eiffel!

BEAT.

BEAT.

HERA
Commander... He's not showing up
on any of my scans.
(beat)
He's gone.

For a long time, that statement and the accompanying static ring out.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 28.

WOLF 359

"PAN-PAN"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(Writer's Note: the following takes place on Day 782 of the Hephaestus Mission.)

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0900 HOURS

In the beginning there is silence.

Slowly a couple of things creep in. The HUM of MACHINERY. The CREAK of a ship's hull. A person's SLOW BREATHING.

And, finally a WEARY SIGH. Let's do this.

CLICK - CLICK - CLICK - CLICK. Various SWITCHES are FLIPPED, and we hear a RADIO RECEIVER BOOTING UP. A few DIALS FLICKER to life.

A BUTTON is PRESSED - a small BURST OF STATIC - and -

MINKOWSKI
Pan-pan, pan-pan, pan-pan. All stations. This is an urgent distress call from the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station.

Except it doesn't *sound* urgent. Her voice is low and weary. It's not the first time she's said this. Not the twentieth time, even.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
One hundred days ago we encountered an undocumented astrophysical phenomenon. The event left severe damage on multiple systems. One of our crew members is missing in action. Station operational status compromised. Requesting immediate assistance from any available craft. Please respond.

She holds. On the other end of the life, only STATIC.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I say again: requesting immediate assistance. Please respond.

Once again, there's just silence. Finally -

HERA
Commander? I don't mean to interrupt, but -

MINKOWSKI
It's okay, Hera. I'm done here.
(switches off the receiver)
Sit rep?

HERA
The crew's ready to begin the day's repair rotation on your mark.

MINKOWSKI
And Lovelace?

HERA
Are you asking if the Captain has deigned to grace us with her -

MINKOWSKI
You know what I'm asking, Hera.

HERA
Hmph. She's in position at the bridge.
(beat)
Commander, wrangling her might be easier if the others knew about -

MINKOWSKI
Not today, Hera. Not today. Tell Hilbert to suit up and meet me at Aft Deck Airlock #2.

HERA
Roger that.

As Minkowski gets underway, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - 0930 HOURS

Minkowski and Hilbert, both in spacesuits, are clinging to the side of the Hephaestus. They are peering into a tangle of exposed wires, pipes, and valves on the side of the station.

We hear their words, and their tense breathing, through their space suits comms system:

MINKOWSKI
All right. Hephaestus repair spacewalk. This is team leader. Tech and I have reached thermal exhaust hatch one.

There's a KRRCH from the radio -

LOVELACE
(over comms)
I think you mean -

MINKOWSKI
(don't start)
We have reached where thermal exhaust hatch one *used to be*. Everyone ready to do this? Tech?

HILBERT
Go.

MINKOWSKI
Systems?

HERA
Go.

MINKOWSKI
Support?

LOVELACE
You already know I'm here.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace...

LOVELACE
Fine, fine. Support is a go. Do the thing. Because it's super important and will save all of our lives.

HERA
I'm sorry, support, but did command ask you for an opinion?

HILBERT
(sotto)
Here we go...

MINKOWSKI
Easy, Hera. Whatever else you have to say, support, stow it, okay? We're out here doing a job and we need you to do yours. Leave the color commentary -

LOVELACE
At the big blue star?

Minkowski GROANS.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Remind me again why I'm stuck doing tech support for your adventures in grease monkeying?

MINKOWSKI
(how many times do I have to go over this...)
Because we need someone to manually shut down this system before we can repair it. And since you're not fit for a spacesuit rotation until you're done recovering from getting skewered with shrapnel, that someone is you. Now, can you shut down electrical grid number seventeen and then report back?

LOVELACE
Can I?

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace. Please.

LOVELACE
Fine.

Another KRRRCH as Lovelace turns off her Comms.

Hilbert begins digging through the wires, occasionally making adjustments with his tools.

For a LONG BEAT Hilbert works. Then -

HILBERT
(still tinkering)
So... what would you like to talk about today?

MINKOWSKI
I don't want to talk about anything. No talking.

HILBERT
I may need to ask about the circuit casing in order to -

MINKOWSKI
No talking about things other than repairs. Repair talk. Thermal compressor talk. Things working like they're supposed to talk. Nothing else.

HILBERT
Hrmm... entire buffer panel will need to go. How did it get so damaged?

HERA
Take your pick... Violent orbital adjustments? Additional gravitational stress? Dangerous course corrections?

HILBERT
In addition to whatever new kinds of radiation the station has been exposed to. Yes.
(beat)
One hundred days. No new anomalies. Radio silence. Why has there been nothing since -

BZZT! At that moment something goes wrong, and we hear an ANGRY SPARKING from whatever Hilbert was doing. A SOFT ALARM begins to go off.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Ahh!

MINKOWSKI
Oh, damn it all...

KRRCH! She gets Lovelace back on the line.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Lovelace! I told you to shut off the electric grid!

LOVELACE
I did!

HILBERT
I'd like to contest that theory! Number five conduit is very much still live!

HERA
You mean the number *six* conduit.

HILBERT
No, number *five.*

MINKOWSKI
Everyone, please...

LOVELACE
I'm looking at the screen and it says -

HERA
I told you, you need to adjust the number *six* conduit.

HILBERT
And that was stupid, and wrong, so I ignored it. Now, Support, please kill number five conduit.

HERA
No! Don't listen to him, Support. Kill the number *six* conduit.

LOVELACE
Believe me, kids, right now I'm up for killing everything and everyone on this boat. But I promise the grid is down.

HILBERT
And I promise you, I will not be able to salvage this system if you cannot stop pouting long enough to follow *very simple* instructions.

HERA
That's rich, coming from you.

HILBERT
What are you implying?!

MINKOWSKI
Team...

LOVELACE
What <u>isn't</u> she implying when it comes to you, Doc?

HERA
If I want your help, Support, I actually won't ask for it and I'll do it myself, thanks.

HILBERT
Ugh, this is an exercise in futility.

LOVELACE
Thank you! There we go. Circle gets the -

HERA
If everyone could just do what -

MINKOWSKI
EVERYBODY SHUT THE -

And that moment something BLOWS UP.

It's outer space, so there's no fire, but the CONCUSSIVE BLAST knocks back both Hilbert and Minkowski. Around them we hear METAL CRUNCHING and BENDING. A few ALARMS GO OFF.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Argh! What is happening? What is happening?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AFT DECK - 25 MINUTES LATER

MINKOWSKI
All right... let's go over what happened.

Opposite her are Lovelace and Hilbert. Everyone, miraculously, seems to be okay.

All at once:

HILBERT
Extremely unprofessional behavior by those two led to serious structural damage and -

HERA
Don't look at me. If he'd been working on the number *six* conduit there wouldn't have -

LOVELACE
(simultaneous with the above)
It's not my problem that these two numbskulls can't figure out how to take apart a -

MINKOWSKI
One at a time! One. At. A. Time.
(beat)
Hera?

HERA
There was an... electrical build up in the thermal exhaust you were trying to repair.

MINKOWSKI
And?

HERA
And it wasn't... properly grounded, so it discharged.

MINKOWSKI
Because...?

HERA
Because humans are d-

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert?

HILBERT
There was a... difference of opinion.

MINKOWSKI
And you decided to settle it by blowing a hole in my station?

LOVELACE
No, *he* decided to settle it by just doing whatever he wanted.

HILBERT
A.I. was being unreasonable. Practical trial was best way -

HERA
It's not being unreasonable if you're *right*. Your "practical trial" blew up the compressor.

HILBERT
Wouldn't have been problem if *someone* had done her job and regulated -

LOVELACE
Don't. I did exactly what you two told me to, and it didn't -

HERA
Well, now we have *another* system in the red just because some of us can't handle not being the smartest -

MINKOWSKI
Quiet.

It's cold, surgical anger. They all shut up instantly.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
One hundred and thirty-seven.
(beat)
Last count, that's how many station systems are showing signs of critical failure. One hundred and thirty-seven. We were going to fix one of those today. We didn't. Instead, it - literally - blew up in our faces. No one died. We got lucky.
(beat)
Look... I get it. You don't like this. Or each other. But I need two pairs of physical hands and one all-powerful A.I. intelligence to keep this station in orbit. So you're going to get over yourselves and *deal*.
(beat)
We do our jobs or people die. And then there aren't any people left.

Lecture over. For a BEAT they float and absorb this.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
All right, get out of here. Get some space, all of you.

A DOOR OPENS, and -

HERA
Uhh... actually, don't. Nobody go get space. Nobody leave the room for the next... the next while.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? What's happening?

HERA
Okay, so... a pretty important part of the thermal system got a little... *blown up* today. And I had to do some pretty quick adjustments to -

MINKOWSKI
Hera. Are we all about to die?

HERA
No. But to not have everyone die, we'll need to shut the thermal system off and do a hard reset to get the generators going again.

HILBERT
How long is that going to take?

HERA
I don't know. Temperature control isn't one of the ones that we usually turn on and off.

MINKOWSKI
Ballpark.

HERA
Umm... an hour? Maybe a couple? A day at most.

LOVELACE
A day?!

MINKOWSKI
When are you doing this reset?

HERA
... thirteen minutes ago.

Hilbert, Minkowski, and Lovelace all GROAN.

HERA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, did I mention the *incredibly quick thinking to keep you all alive*? I've rerouted the auxiliary heat to the room you're in. It should stay habitable.

HILBERT
Which is to say, it will not be *comfortable*. In half an hour, this room will be freezing.

HERA
Which'll still make it better than everywhere else on the station. By over a hundred degrees.

LOVELACE
So... we're all camping out together - in the *slightly* less frozen part of the station - until... what?
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
The engine decides it's had enough of the Hephaestus being a simulation of *Siberia*?

HERA
Beautifully put, Captain.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Well, this day's going to *fly* by.

And as everyone takes this in, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AFT DECK - 1300 HOURS

Later.

Everyone is still together, but Minkowski, Hilbert, and Lovelace look considerably worse for wear. The temperature has plummeted, and as they speak, we hear shivering, teeth chattering, etc.

LOVELACE
How... how long has it been?

MINKOWSKI
Three hours.

HILBERT
Just like the last time you asked. Five minutes ago.

LOVELACE
This is ridiculous.

HILBERT
Complaining will not make time move faster.

LOVELACE
It'll make you more annoyed, though.

HILBERT
Which, of course, is reason to do it.

HERA
It's a reason to do anything, really.

LOVELACE
Question for you, Hera: Would this go any faster if we could suspend your mouth functions? Not your voice functions, just your *mouth* ones.

MINKOWSKI
Back off, you three. We're not whiling away the hours by parsing out blame.

HILBERT
Seems like fantastic past-time. Very good distraction.

MINKOWSKI
Cool it, doctor.

HILBERT
Word choice. Don't talk about cooling.

MINKOWSKI
Just *drop it*, okay?

Everyone silently sulks for a BEAT.

LOVELACE
But what if we didn't drop it?

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace!

LOVELACE
No. I've dealt with one round of this crap from you people, and I'm not doing it again. Is this just how things are now? Is a different part of the station going to fall off each day?

HILBERT
It would seem so.

LOVELACE
Well, can't we do something about it?

MINKOWSKI
Captain, we don't have an enormous amount of options right now.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Rescue is our best bet, but I've already been putting out distress calls twice a day, and -

LOVELACE
Distress calls. Jesus, who the hell do you think is going to pick up?

MINKOWSKI
Our sector's dispatch center. The Hermes is just over a light year away from our position. If our orbits line up, transmissions could get to them -

LOVELACE
And then what? How long will it take them to get their asses in gear?

MINKOWSKI
(through gritted teeth)
I don't know.

LOVELACE
The only way we're going to get off this station is if we do it ourselves. We need to -

MINKOWSKI
Captain...

HILBERT
We have been over this...

LOVELACE
(louder)
We need to stop wasting time, and resources, on repairs that *don't work* and focus on making a new escape craft. We still have Fourier's designs, plenty of material, and one working VX3 engine. We can do it.

HERA
Hmph.

Lovelace looks up at the loudspeaker.

LOVELACE
Was that "hmph" aimed at me, Hera?

HERA
Okay. Let me just recap this... "plan" of yours.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
First, you're going to decipher genius astrophysics equations, which, by the way, you can't do. And then you're going to put together resources, which by the way, don't exist, into a new shuttle that, well, let's be generous and say that it *theoretically* works. Then what? How well did it go the last time that you - ?

MINKOWSKI
Hera. Not the time.

For a tense moment the words just hang in the air. Then -

HILBERT
There... might be a third option.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert?

HILBERT
Correct me if I am wrong, Commander, but... we do still have a working pulse beacon re -

LOVELACE
(instantly)
No. Forget it.

HILBERT
Could we at least discuss the possibility?

LOVELACE
There's nothing to discuss. That's not an option.

HILBERT
We have a line to Command. We might be able to contact Cutter directly.

LOVELACE
And what? You think he's gonna give a crap about anything that's happening to us?

HILBERT
He might if we drop a few tantalizing mentions of the unprecedented alien phenomenon happening outside our window.

LOVELACE
Which'll just make him kill us faster.

HILBERT
You don't know that.

LOVELACE
Yes, I do. He'll get together a bunch of psychos -
(re: Hilbert)
- like *you* - and send them up here to get rid of us once and for all. No thanks. I'll take my chances before I give them the satisfaction.

HILBERT
You were always far too proud for your own good.

LOVELACE
What the hell is that -

MINKOWSKI
All right, **enough.** Look, we'll figure out how to *not* die in the long term after we don't freeze to death in the short term. But you all need to cut it the hell out. If you're only going to fight, then stop talking to each other. Everyone pick a corner and chill out.

HILBERT
Please do not talk about chilling at this -

MINKOWSKI
Pick a corner and <u>relax</u>. Hop to it.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
How long has it been -

MINKOWSKI, HILBERT, AND HERA
<u>Don't ask</u>.

LOVELACE
Okay, fine, but then someone has to say something. I refuse to just sit quietly, doing nothing, in the freezing cold.

It's at this point that a loud, ELECTRONIC BUZZER begins ringing out. It's not quite an alarm, but it definitely means something's wrong.

Minkowski and Hilbert turn their heads to look at Lovelace.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Just... shut up. Just don't even try anymore...

MINKOWSKI
Hera? What's going on now?

HERA
Uhh... oh. The main thermal generator. It's... overheating.

HILBERT
It's <u>what</u>?

LOVELACE
(how dare it)
The entire station is frickin' Space Yukon and this thing is <u>overheating</u>?

HERA
It looks that way.

MINKOWSKI
How do we fix it?

HERA
Uh...someone goes down to engineering and and manually resets the valves? Otherwise I may need to reboot the system again.

Many GROANS from the floor.

LOVELACE
Well, that's just great. How are we supposed to do that?

MINKOWSKI
We'll have to think of something...

And off of that -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AFT DECK - 10 MINUTES LATER

We hear a ZIPPER as Hilbert finishes putting his space suit back on.

HILBERT
Why do *I* have to fix the generator?

MINKOWSKI
Because Lovelace has four more weeks of physical therapy before she's fit to wear a space suit. And because if I went and left the two of you alone, there'd be at least one dead body by the time I got back.

She slaps on his helmet and SNAPS it shut.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Now get cracking.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as Hilbert exits the room. For the brief moment when the door is open, we hear what sounds like a BLAST OF COLD AIR.

For a BEAT Minkowski and Lovelace float in silence.

HERA
I'm sorry, Commander. I didn't realize this would be a problem.

MINKOWSKI
It's okay, Hera.

LOVELACE
Is it, though?

Minkowski SIGHS wearily. Really? More?

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, now is not the -

LOVELACE
No, but it's never the right time, is it? I'm sorry that you don't think it's nice to play the blame game, but I am tired of acting like everything is going to be fine.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I am sick of pretending there's nothing wrong. There's a lot wrong, starting with the fact that nothing on this station works. And you know what? That's someone's fault.

HERA
Careful, Captain...

LOVELACE
How many systems on this station are fully operational? How many parts of the infrastructure are stable?

HERA
Have you seen what I'm dealing with? I'm making it work.

LOVELACE
Oh, are you? Tell me, what's going on with the showers in the crew quarters?

HERA
They're under repairs.

LOVELACE
What about that interference in the radar system?

HERA
On the to-do list.

LOVELACE
Dead circuits in the hangar bay rigging?

HERA
(gritted digital teeth)
Working on it.

LOVELACE
Well, that's nice. You know what all those things have in common? They were all broken *before* the star went crazy. Face it, it's not just the star. It's the autopilot.

HERA
You want to get out of my face. Right now.

LOVELACE
Okay, tell you what: do something for me. Just... count to ten. Without glitching. Prove to me that you *can* do something right, and I'll leave you alone.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you don't have to -

HERA
Be quiet, Commander.
(beat)
One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Ei-eight.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Yeah, that's what I thought.

HERA
That's not my fault.

LOVELACE
Then who's fault is it?

The DOOR OPENS. Hilbert enters.

HILBERT
(taking off his helmet)
All right, that should take care of the thermal generator.
(looks around)
What did I miss?

Lovelace LAUGHS.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, don't start.

LOVELACE
No, let's talk about this. Let's discuss the fact that you've let a murderer have the run of the Hephaestus. That you trusted the man who's done more harm than anyone else on this station!

MINKOWSKI
You'd rather I'd let you bleed out from the shrapnel?

LOVELACE
What about every time since then?

MINKOWSKI
The station needs repairs. I need hands. I work with what I have.

LOVELACE
And then what happens? Don't tell me you're stupid enough to believe you can pull him back form the dark side. You think that... What? If you show him enough of that good Protestant work ethic and squeaky clean Disney table manners it's gonna remind him of what it's like to have a soul?

Hilbert lets out a DISGUSTED GROAN.

HILBERT
All right. Let us expedite this pointless conversation.
(clears his throat)
My name is Alexander Hilbert. I have attempted to murder everyone in this room. Doctor Hui, Officer Lambert, Doctor Fourier, Rhea. I killed all of them. If the situation were the same, I would kill all of them again. I am also the only person here who -

But before he can finish, POW! Hilbert flies around the room, crashing against the wall. A moment later he straightens himself up, the blood from his nose already starting to freeze.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
There. You punched a bad guy. Feel better? <u>Can we move on now</u>?

LOVELACE
(at Minkowski and Hera)
I will never understand you people. How can you stand to be around him?

HILBERT
Because they understand what you never have. You do what you need to. You adapt. You survive. Sometimes you have to work with the devil, but -

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, stop talking.

HILBERT
Why? Am I being too indelicate?

MINKOWSKI
No, because if you don't shut up right this second she's not going to get a chance to kill you.
(beat)
We may work with you, but don't think for a moment we'll ever forgive you.

HILBERT
(temper rising)
I have never asked for forgiveness. Never. But perhaps *you* should, Captain Lovelace. After all, I only *attempted* to kill Officer Eiffel. I never...

But something makes him stop. Lovelace's eyes narrow.

LOVELACE
Go ahead. Say it. I know you've all been thinking it. For <u>months</u>. So just <u>say it</u>.
(beat)
<u>Say it</u>! And then you can have that excuse to hate me you all want so badly.

HERA
We don't need excuses. We have these amazing things called <u>reasons</u>. In the plural. And they all involve you either threatening to murder someone on this crew, or you *actually* murdering someone!

And there we go. It's finally out.

LOVELACE
And finally she says it!
(runaway train)
I'm sorry, okay? I didn't know what would happen, I couldn't have known, and then things went wrong, they went so, so wrong, but there was nothing I could have done!
(softly)
I didn't kill Eiffel, Hera.

HERA
Your bomb. Same difference.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, no. Stop.

HERA
And you know what makes it all extra special? You're a Captain! You're supposed to keep your crew safe. Safe from bombs and viruses and - and outer space! You're supposed to protect them and make sure they don't die!

MINKOWSKI
(I am going to snap)
Hera, enough.

HERA
No, Commander, I -

MINKOWSKI
(Snapping)
I said enough!

LOVELACE
No! She wants to have it out with me -

HERA
You have no idea how much I -

MINKOWSKI
(Snapped like a twig)
OKAY, FINE! **Screw it**! Screw our safety, and our sanity, and all the emergencies that need our attention. Have at it each other! But first every single one of you needs to have it out with me.

HERA
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
Shut up, Hera!

Whoa. That's new.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I am the person who sent Eiffel out into that shuttle.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I'm the person who is supposedly in charge and never has any idea what to do! The person who can't even get the three of you to be quiet for five minutes!

HILBERT
Commander, it is complicated situation. You cannot -

MINKOWSKI
Don't you dare! Don't you dare try to back me up, you selfish, traitorous vulture. You are the last person I want in my corner. But I am done. Okay? I am done trying to be above all this and if all we're going to do now is yell at each other, I refuse to be left out.

LOVELACE
Look, Minkowski -

MINKOWSKI
Doug Eiffel is gone!
(beat, softer:)
There was nothing we could do to save him. It wasn't anyone's fault. It's horrible, and pointless, and it just happened. Just like the cracks, and the station just keeps falling apart. And there's nothing I can do, and I am sorry. I'm sorry.

A BEAT.

HILBERT
What do you mean by "cracks?"

Minkowski SIGHS.

MINKOWSKI
There's something I haven't told you.

HERA
Commander, are you sure -

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Hera. I'm sure. Besides, it's not like this day can get any worse.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(beat)
Two weeks after the star turned blue, I was doing repairs to the life support, trying to realign one of the structural beams. I found stress fractures. Running all the way to the station's hull.

LOVELACE
What?

MINKOWSKI
And they're not the only ones. There's other ones in hydraulics, fuel intake, electrics, all the big systems.

HERA
They're the reason why so many things have been breaking down, and why nothing stays fixed. And we don't know if they showed up when the star changed, or if they were there before but... they're there. And it's a problem.

LOVELACE
How big of a problem?
(beat)
What are we talking about here?

HERA
What we are talking about... is the end of operational life. The Hephaestus is rotting. From the inside out.

Lovelace and Hilbert take that in.

HILBERT
How do we fix it?

MINKOWSKI
We don't. This is not a thing we fix.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
How much time?

HERA
Depends on what breaks first. If we're lucky, one hundred days.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Maybe a hundred and twenty. If we're not... seventy. Sixty.

HILBERT
Why... why had you not told us about this?

MINKOWSKI
Because... you didn't need to know. Because you'd suffered enough. Because I thought maybe we could get rescued before you needed to find out. I didn't want to say anything yet. I wanted us to be in better shape before I told you. But I guess we're not going to be.

For a LONG BEAT everyone just looks at each other. There's nothing else to say. And then -

FWOOOSH! There's a blast of air from a nearby vent.

HERA
Thermal system and temperature controls are now back online. Thank you for your patience.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Hera.

And off of no one quite reacting to that -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1900 HOURS

Minkowski is alone on the Bridge. There's a KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MINKOWSKI
Come in.

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Captain.

BEAT.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Was... there something you wanted to say? Or should I -

LOVELACE
You should do it. Call Command. Tell them what's happened.

MINKOWSKI
That's a change in policy for you. What made you change your mind?

LOVELACE
What can I say? Cooler heads prevailed?
(beat, serious)
Commander's supposed to protect their crew, make sure they don't die. I don't see any other way to do it.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace...

LOVELACE
Just do it. Before I change my mind and try to stop you.

She goes, CLOSING the door behind her. Minkowski turns towards the controls.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? What do you think?

HERA
I... I think this is your call. Sir.

BEAT.

HERA (CONT’D)
Commander? Are you okay?

MINKOWSKI
No. You?

HERA
No. But I will be. Would you like me to initiate the pulse beacon relay?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, please.

After a moment, there's a DING from the console.

HERA
Channel's open, Commander. You can speak whenever you're ready.

Minkowski thinks for a moment, and then she begins:

MINKOWSKI
Pan-pan, pan-pan, pan-pan. Canaveral. This is an urgent distress call from Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski, on board the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. One hundred days ago we encountered an undocumented astrophysical phenomenon. The event left severe damages on multiple systems. Communications Officer Doug Eiffel is missing in action... and presumed dead. Station operational status compromised. Requesting immediate assistance. Please respond. I say again: requesting immediate assistance. Please respond.

She holds. On the other end of the line, only STATIC.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 29.

WOLF 359

"MAYDAY"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(Writer's Note: the following takes place between Day 666 and Day 859 of the Hephaestus Mission.)

We begin with our delightful opening music and top of the show announcement. And just as we're getting to the point where someone should speak, the MUSIC FREEZES -

And then, suddenly, violently, it begins to REWIND.

We go back, and back, through all of the music, past all of the music, and we just keep going. We go back a day, a week, a month, and rewind all the way back to:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - DAY 666

We come in on Eiffel, sitting at the controls of Lovelace's shuttle. Various bits of equipment BEEP SOFTLY.

EIFFEL
All right...

He TYPES a few commands into the system. A moment later the shuttle's engine WHIRRS faintly, then SPUTTERS.

There's an ERROR BUZZ from the console. Eiffel frowns.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
C'mon, Space Fiat, tell me you've got one more trip in you...

He tries again, followed by the same SPUTTER and ERROR BUZZ.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hmm... maybe not. Still, beats the big blue wrecking ball over there.

Slowly it should become clear where, and when, we are: the last scene of Who's There?

And right on cue, there's a COMMS BUZZER, followed by:

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Eiffel? You there?

Eiffel turns towards a different part of the console.

EIFFEL
Yeah, Commander. How's Lovelace?

MINKOWSKI
Still touch and go, but she's hanging on. And things on your side?

EIFFEL
Well, I can't get the main engine to turn on. The VX3's not responding at all.

HERA
(over comms)
It was an older model... We may have pushed it too far, used up all the charge that was left.

EIFFEL
Well, that's encouraging.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel just hang tight. You're drifting, but pretty slowly. We'll steer the Hephaestus within range, and then you can use the propulsion maneuvering system to get back here.

EIFFEL
Nah, hang on. I think I might be able to get the booster to come back online. I should be able to use those to -

Over the comms: BEEEEEEEEEEEEEP. Lovelace's EKG let's out the low, warning tone of a flatline.

HILBERT
(over comms)
CLEAR!

Over the comms: PHUMP! A BLIP from the EKG -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
CLEAR!

Over the comms: PHUMP! A BLIP from the EKG, and this time it goes back to steady BEEPS.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Did... was that...?

MINKOWSKI
It's... It's okay, Eiffel. I think... I don't think that was enough for the sensor to -

BOOM! There's a HORRIFIC EXPLOSION in the back of the ship, at the engines.

At once a lot of things happen:

- Metal GROANS and CRACKS all over the shuttle.

- Eiffel is SLAMMED BACKWARDS as the ship lurches forward. He HITS the back of the shuttle with a SHARP, PAINED YELL.

- Various vents and passageways begin to HISS LOUDLY as air begins to seep out of the shuttle.

- And every ALARM and WARNING in the console GOES BALLISTIC.

Eiffel struggles to pull himself up -

EIFFEL
Goddammit.

- and makes his way to the console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay. Stay calm. What's the biggest problem? What's going the most wrong?

He begins frantically pressing buttons, going back and forth between the various screens.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(fast)
Engine fire? Uh... no, fire containment's green. But that's in spite of the fact that we just had a big ass explosion, which means... air! Losing air, we're losing air.
(snaps fingers)
Okay!

He grabs an ENORMOUS, RUSTY CRANK towards the back of the controls.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(straining)
Number one... emergency... pressure hatch... closed!

KA-THUNK! AN ENORMOUSLY HEAVY METAL HATCH SLIDES DOWN in the back of the cabin. It SLAMS SHUT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(straining from the effort)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Number two... emergency pressure hatch... closed!

KA-THUNK! Another METAL HATCH SLAMS DOWN.

Almost instantly all of the AIR HISSING STOPS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, okay! Engine section sealed off! Survey says...

He turns to the controls, where TWO ALARMS have SHUT OFF. A moment later, there's a SOFT DING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yes! Stable pressure! Top answer on the board, that's what I'm talking about! Okay, okay - next!

He's back at the console, inputting commands.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Rerouting power... back to the radio system...

Two more ALARMS SWITCH OFF. And finally - a BURST OF STATIC as the receiver engages!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday!
(beat)
Hephaestus, do you copy? Mayday, mayday.

MINKOWSKI
(patchy, through comms)
Yes! We -- get me his position. Eiffel, did -

EIFFEL
Yes, it went off! I don't know if the VX3's core went nuclear, but the engine got torn apart! I've got no boosters, and the cabin's spinning, going real fast!

MINKOWSKI
Hera tell -- -ack to the star?

HERA
No, he's mov -- -owards deep space. And --

HILBERT
Eiffel! You need to slow down, or find -- Hephaestus. Can you comply?

EIFFEL
I cannot! I have no controls, there's no way for me to change course. What I need is a way to get off this ship!

MINKOWSKI
Hera, we --

HERA
(static)
- too fast.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we're not -- figure out --

HERA
He's about to leave shortwave comms range!

EIFFEL
Commander, I need something here! *Anything*. Just tell me what to -

And the radio connection collapses into STATIC. Line's dead.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- do...

For a moment he just stares at the receiver in horror. Then he CLICKS to another channel. Static - nothing.

He CLICKS to another channel. Same.

CLICK. Nothing.

He SHUTS OFF the RECEIVER. For the first time since the explosion things are silent.

BEAT.

And then EIFFEL SCREAMS.

It's pure, unadulterated, rage. Bitterness. Indignation. After everything - *everything* - that he's been through, this is where he ends up?!?

Finally, slowly, the scream stops. And, aside from Eiffel hyperventilating, everything is silent again.

And then:

MINKOWSKI
Okay. You needed that. But now you have to concentrate.

Her voice isn't coming through the comms, but it isn't quite there either. There's a certain other-worldly quality to it.

EIFFEL
(low)
No, no, you're not here.

MINKOWSKI
Of course I'm not, but who gives a crap? You're almost certainly going to die, so we need to <u>focus</u>. The next few minutes are very important. Panic is unacceptable.

Eiffel takes a few DEEP BREATH, steadies himself.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Do you know what is happening right now?

EIFFEL
Yeah. Yeah, I'm... moving. Fast. I'm not in orbit anymore, and I'm headed towards deep space.

MINKOWSKI
Which is bad.

EIFFEL
Well, if you have any <u>helpful</u> advice about how to *not* head towards the part of the kingdom the light doesn't touch, I am now taking suggestions from the floor.

MINKOWSKI
Slow down.

EIFFEL
Very funny.

MINKOWSKI
Turn around. Change course. Don't go into deep space.

EIFFEL
<u>How</u>?

MINKOWSKI
Any way you can.

EIFFEL
Listen, Commander Harvey, I don't know if you were paying attention, but I can't exactly steer this thing! Our main engine's gone because of bomb. Our aft booster's - let's take a look -

He hits a SWITCH. There's an ANGRY GRINDING NOISE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, not happening! And our starboard booster's not going to - FWOAH!

He hits another SWITCH, but this one, unexpectedly actually ENGAGES the BOOSTER. It ROARS TO LIFE, SHAKING THE SHUTTLE.

And a second later, it SHUTS OFF!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, what was that? Is that actually...

He hits the SWITCH again, but now he just gets an ERROR BUZZ. Tries again: SWITCH, BUZZ. He looks at the computer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Outta power... Must be running off the aux power system, so I'll need to let it recharge. Still...

MINKOWSKI
Better than nothing.

EIFFEL
Sure, sure... Okay, what now?

MINKOWSKI
Now you figure out how to stay alive.

EIFFEL
Gee, when you put it like that... Any suggestions?

MINKOWSKI
Oh I don't know, if only we had some sort of *reference guide* for what to do in these sorts of extreme situations...

EIFFEL
What?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... I worked on this shuttle. Reprogramming that console.

EIFFEL
So? How does that help -

MINKOWSKI
Think about it.

BEAT. And then he gets it.

EIFFEL
Oh goddammit.

He rushes towards the console, starts TYPING.

MINKOWSKI
What's the first thing that I would do when programming a flight computer? The first thing I'd make damn sure was hard wired into anything that *might* end up in a situation like this one?

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. The computer CHIMES as a file pulls up on a screen.

EIFFEL
Pyrce and Carter's -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- Deep Space Survival Procedure and Protocol Manual.

MINKOWSKI
- Deep Space Survival Procedure and Protocol Manual.

EIFFEL
Right. Okay. Well... let's take a look...

And as Eiffel starts reading the file, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - 75 HOURS LATER

Eiffel sits at the controls waiting. For a moment he stares at the console. Then -

DING!

Eiffel nods to himself, thinking.

EIFFEL
Okay... Okay. It takes seventy-four hours. Seventy-four hours for the aux system to recharge to power the booster for... one point five seconds. Which is just *great*.

MINKOWSKI
Under the circumstances. Now do your job.

He taps a few controls. There's a BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL
Mayday, mayday, mayday. All ships at sea, this is the... U.S.S. Reliant Robin. We have complete operational breakdown, and require immediate assistance. Please respond. Is anyone out there?

He waits. No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, didn't think so.

He shuts off the radio. TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay, okay, okay. One thousand and one deep space survival tips. Which, putting it in technicals terms, is A LOT. So you'd think -

MINKOWSKI
Don't dwell on it.

EIFFEL
You'd *think* that once I whittled it down to the parts that are relevant to my current situation, there would be more than a grand total of... three.

MINKOWSKI
Give me the list. Top three Deep Space Survival Tips.

EIFFEL
Deep Space Survival Tip #199: "Confront reality head-on.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You cannot succeed if you don't know what the obstacles are. Hope can bring strength, but ignorance makes death inevitable." So, here's reality:

We hear him SLIDE OPEN A CUPBOARD.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Lovelace stocked the ship with freeze-dried rations and protein packs. Full meals for about seventy days, more or less what it'd take to get to Earth if you have a nice VX3 on a sublight arc. I can probably stretch that to about a hundred days.

He SHUTS the CUPBOARD.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
The good captain was also kind enough to put a high efficiency oxygen recycling system in here, so... it's actually making air faster than I can breathe it.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Water's a problem.
(taps a screen)
Reclamation was tied into the main engine so... that's gone. There's 1,143 liters in the shuttle systems, and after that... Yeah.

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Next! Deep Space Survival Tip #754: "In an emergency, take stock of the tools at your disposal. Then take stock again. Restock. Repurpose. Reuse. Recycle." Sounds nice. So here's what I've stocked:

As he speaks he CLICKS SWITCHES and PRESSES BUTTONS on the controls. His lines are punctuated with various digital noises.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Any kind of propulsion went away when the VX3 blew up, so I've only got whatever runs off liquid fuel or electrical. Life support? Check. Cryogenic stasis pod? Check. Temperature? Check. Most other things? Not so much a check.

I've got navigation, so I can keep track of how every hour I'm 17,000 miles further away from the Hephaestus. Hooray. The only working item that's even close to propulsion controls is the starboard booster. So... I can't go faster, I can't go slower, but every three days I can very slightly nudge myself to the left.

He lets out a single, bitter CHORTLE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And last but certainly not least: Deep Space Survival Tip #1001: "In times of trouble, an idle mind is your worst enemy. Keep yourself occupied at all times. Don't stop. Good luck."

So... what are we doing? Eiffel's Action Plan #1: turn this boat around, get back to the Hephaestus. With my current flight capabilities, that should only take... way more time than I got.

Eiffel's Action Plan #2: Keep going forward and... do something awesome. Eiffel's Action Plan #3: Use Minkowski's jet pack and do something baller! You might be noticing that Eiffel's Action Plans all <u>suck</u> and involve <u>dying in space</u>!

Frustration is starting to creep into his gallows humor bravado. BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(slow, rueful)
Time. Time's the problem. Everything takes too much time. Which means I'm going to -

And that's when he's cut off by a sudden, VIOLENT SLAP.

LOVELACE
Cut that out! That's dead-boy talk!

EIFFEL
Ow! What is wrong with you?!

LOVELACE
Your whining. It's boring. Do something useful!

EIFFEL
I can't.

LOVELACE
Yes, you can. You're a communications officer. Get on that radio. Communicate.

EIFFEL
With **who**? Space. Is. Big! If you look out the rear hatch of the plane, you will see the Hephaestus like a million miles behind us. If you look out the front window, you'll see Earth eight light years away. What do you want me to do?

LOVELACE
Find someone else!

EIFFEL
There's no one el-

But the word dies in his mouth. As he remembers.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yes. Yes there is. The, uh, the... the dispatch station! It's the, uh -

MINKOWSKI
(faint, almost an echo)
U.S.S. Hermes.

EIFFEL
The Hermes! Yes!

He's at the controls, inputting coordinates.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(low, as he works)
Don't even need an exact bullseye...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
just close enough for them to pick up a shortwave distress signal...

A number comes up on the screen. Eiffel lets out a low, ANNOYED GROWL.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
The Hermes is a little over a light year away. But given our current trajectory, we're going to miss it by...

We hear a sound like a DIGITAL COUNTER GOING UP.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(flat)
Two million, fourteen thousand, five hundred and twenty-two miles.
(beat)
Although...

LOVELACE
Although?

EIFFEL
That's two million miles... to the *left*. I wonder if...

He hits the BOOSTER SWITCH, and, once again, it ROARS TO LIFE. And, once again, it switches off after about a second.

Eiffel waits for a moment and then -

The DIGITAL COUNTER ADJUSTS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Two million... *seven* thousand, three-hundred and seven miles off course.
(beat)
Okay. Okay. We can do this.
(typing commands)
I get one course adjustment of about seven thousand miles every three days, which means getting on course is going to take me...

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Three hundred and two days. Dammit.

LOVELACE
Don't give up.

EIFFEL
It's not going to work. I'm going to have starved before I even get on track!

LOVELACE
Then make the food last longer!

EIFFEL
(voice rising)
How? Should I go on a diet?

LOVELACE
Go on a diet, break bread, freeze yourself in the cryo pod, I don't care, just do it!

EIFFEL
Oh, yeah, sure! If all else fails, I can always freeze myself!
(beat)
Holy crap, I can freeze myself.

He moves to the back of the cabin, and tinkers with controls to the cryo-stasis pod. After a moment, the pod WHIRRS TO LIFE. The compartment OPENS, letting out a HISS OF AIR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is this going to work?

LOVELACE
I don't know. I only know what you know.

EIFFEL
Shut up. Not the time to go meta on me.
(beat)
If I'm in cryo, my body functions are frozen in place. I don't need to eat, so I don't starve. Right?

LOVELACE
Works in theory.

EIFFEL
Well, let's take it on a test drive. Seventy-four hours?

LOVELACE
Seventy-four hours. Good luck.

We hear him setting a DIAL on the machine. GEARS TURN. It sounds like a dentist's chair adjusting.

EIFFEL
All right... well, here goes nothing.

He gets into the pod, and immediately we hear the machine engage. We hear WHIRRING, COGS TURNING. The COMPARTMENT SNAPS SHUT over him.

The POD CHARGES UP. We hear a SHARP DISCHARGE OF AIR, and a SOFT WHIMPER as Eiffel is hit with the blast of cold and -

And then he's in stasis.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - 74 HOURS LATER

For a moment everything is still.

Then we hear a DING from the console.

A moment later, there's a SOFT BEEPING. The GEARS on the stasis pod start to turn, there's a WHIRRING and the unmistakable sound of CRACKING ICE. Finally -

The COMPARTMENT OPENS. Eiffel doesn't so much fall as *spills* out. He collapses, convulses, clutching his side, CHOKING, and SPUTTERING, and COUGHING FURIOUSLY.

The effect - and the experience - is not unlike that of a drowning victim being resuscitated.

As Eiffel continues HACKING and GASPING for air, the console starts BEEPING.

EIFFEL
(pained)
Son of a bitch... there... *has* to be a better way to fly...
(at console)
Yeah, yeah, hang on for just a second. Hold up...

He weakly pulls himself up to the console, and FLIPS the SWITCH. Once again, the BOOSTER TURNS ON, THRUMS CLEANLY for a second, and then SPUTTERS and GOES OFF.

Eiffel turns his head towards the digital counter, and after a second it ADJUSTS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million... nine-hundred and ninety-nine thousand miles of course.

He slumps down, still very weak.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay... so that worked. Now what?

LOVELACE
Now you do it again.

EIFFEL
Again... how many times?

LOVELACE
As many as it takes.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Oh God...

As he takes on the enormity of what's ahead of him, we -

CUT TO:

AUDIO MONTAGE SEQUENCE

We get quick snippets of Eiffel as he goes through the torturous process over and over again.

We begin with a BURST OF STATIC, followed by -

EIFFEL
Mayday, mayday, mayday, all ships at sea. This is Officer Eiffel, onboard the U.S.S. Pontiac Aztek. I have been stranded on board a non-operational vessel for fifteen days. I require immediate emergency assistance. Please respond.

Overlapping with those last few words, we hear the console DING as the booster system recharges.

A moment later, Eiffel HITS the SWITCH, and BOOSTER ENGAGES.

DIGITAL NUMBER FLICKERS as the NAV COUNTER ADJUSTS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million, nine-hundred and eighty thousand miles off course...

The STASIS POD ENGAGES as he presses a digital switch.

GEARS TURNS, METAL WHIRRS, the COMPARTMENT OPENS, and there's the SHARP BLAST OF AIR.

ICE CONDENSES - and a moment later begins to crack.

The COMPARTMENT REOPENS, Eiffel spills out, CONVULSING and HACKING.

And overlapping with the last of the above - we do it again.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday, all ships at sea. This is Officer Eiffel, on board the U.S.S. Ford Excursion. I have been stranded on board a non-operational vessel for thirty-nine days.

There's the DING, followed by the SWTICH and the THRUM of the thruster.

The DIGITAL COUNTER FLICKERS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million, six-hundred and twenty thousand miles off course...

GEARS TURN. METAL WHIRRS.

There's the SHARP BLAST OF AIR, and the CRACK OF FORMING ICE.

AIR HISSES as the compartment SNAPS OPEN.

Eiffel CONVULSES, BACKS, CHOKES.

And away we go, going slightly faster -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday, all ships at sea...

And as he continues, overlapping, we hear -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... non-operational vessel for fifty-six days. I require immediate emergency assistance. Please respond.

Once again, the console DINGS, and a moment later he HITS the SWITCH.

The BOOSTER ROARS, THRUMS, SPUTTERS -

The digital counter flickers down to -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million, five-hundred and nineteen thousand miles off course...

The stasis pod WHIRRS to life, opening the compartment to admit its patient.

There's another SHARP BLAST OF AIR, ANOTHER WHIMPER -

The layer of ICE CRACKS, and Eiffel spills out of the MACHINE, COUGHING, and HACKING, and -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
My... my toes are starting to bleed. I... guess you're not supposed to put yourself under so many times.

But nothing to it. And already underneath that we start to hear **another round, faster and sharper.**

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... non-opertional vessel for sixty-three days.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... please respond.

And over that, we hear the DING, followed by the SWITCH, and followed by the fleeting HUM of the BOOSTER.

And starting to overlap with that, the digital COUNTER ADJUSTS, falling down to -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million, three-hundred and ninety-eight thousand miles off course...

The GEARS of the STASIS POD TURN, it OPENS, it gives the BLAST of AIR -

Eiffel collapses out of the machine, convulsing -

And again. Even faster.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... stranded on a non-operational vessel for ...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... my nails are starting to fall off and I can't feel below my shins...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... please respond.

We flicker through the routine, going faster and faster -

DING, followed by SWITCH, followed the THRUM of the booster, and down goes the digital COUNTER to -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One million, four-thousand miles...

GEARS TURN, followed by a BLAST OF ICY AIR, in he goes -

And out he comes, COUGHING, and SHAKING and -

Again. Even faster.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday, mayday, mayday...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping)
... One hundred and twenty one days...

DING!

SWITCH!

BOOSTER!

COUNTER!

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
(overlapping)
... last of my hair fell out today...

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
(overlapping)
Five hundred and sixty thousand miles off course...

GEARS!

WHIRR!

AIR!

ICE!

And again -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Mayday...

DING!

SWITCH!

COUNTER!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Miles off course...

GEARS!

WHIRR!

ICE!

And again, lighting fast -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(overlapping with the following:)
Mayday, mayday, mayday...

DING!

SWITCH!

COUNTER!

GEARS!

WHIRR!

ICE!

Until - **everything stops.**

And we hear clearly:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I require immediate emergency assistance. Please respond.
(beat - then soft, tired:)
Please respond.

And then there is silence.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - DAY 878

We hear WHISTLING.

Eiffel rests in a corner of the cabin. He stares into the distance, and whistles the main theme from The Great Escape.

As he gets to the end of the melody -

HILBERT
Well? Are you finished?

EIFFEL
Nope. I've got my entire mental John Williams discography to get through.

HILBERT
Eiffel, we need to talk.

EIFFEL
Go away, Doc.

HILBERT
There is a mathematical reality that you are not taking into consideration. And if I am here, it is because some part of you think you have to confront it!

EIFFEL
Mathema - Are you crazy? Look at me, Zoidberg: I've lost half my body weight. I don't have hair. I don't have nails. Does it look like I'm up for calculus right now?

HILBERT
Fine. Go back to drowning yourself in carbonite. See if I care.

EIFFEL
You wouldn't know that word. Hilbert's never even heard of *Empire*.

HILBERT
Time! The problem is time.

BEAT. Eiffel turns to him.

EIFFEL
Say your piece.

HILBERT
Being on course is not the same thing as being on time. It will be another eighty days before this craft is on an *approximate* intercept course with the last known trajectory of U.S.S. Hermes. Then you still need to cover the distance. About one light year's worth of distance.

EIFFEL
So? I'll just put myself under the ice for the duration.

HILBERT
And how long do you think that will be?

EIFFEL
I don't know. We're doing... what? Seventeen thousand miles per hour? That should get us there in something like -

Eiffel does a bit of mathematics in his head, mumbling softly. Gradually he slows down, realizing -

HILBERT
Six thousand years.

There's a BEAT as that sinks in.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Time is the problem.

EIFFEL
Six *thousand*... so even if I *do* make it out of this... Everyone I know will be gone. I'm still going to be... Well that's just great.

HILBERT
How do you know there will even be anything there by the time you -

EIFFEL
(temper rising)
Doc, really appreciate this whole, "Horrifying Reality" check-in, but I'm late for a frostbite nap and you really need to go.

He hits the controls of the cryo-stasis chamber, and it starts WHIRRING to life.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You can show yourself out.

HILBERT
Fine. But before, I go, allow me to offer one more thought.

EIFFEL
(snapping)
What?

HILBERT
How have you been regulating the hydraulic flow into the cryogenic-stasis device?

EIFFEL
How have I been whatting the huh?

And that moment the WHIRRING SNAPS, and something goes horribly wrong with the cryo-stasis pod. There's a SPARK, and an ARCING, and then various pieces of MACHINERY POWER DOWN.

HILBERT
Never mind.

And off of that comforting note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - FLIGHT DECK - DAY 859

Eiffel at the controls. He HITS a BUTTON, and there's a BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL
Mayday, mayday, mayday, all ships at sea. This is Doug Eiffel on board the... U.S.S. Horrible Unending Nightmare. I am in need of immediate emergency assistance. Please respond.

BEAT. Nothing.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(flat)
Surprise, surprise.
(sighs)
Well, long as no one's there, no one's going to mind if I go out speaking, right dear listeners?

Fun fact: hydro-cryogenic stasis pods use up water. They use up *a lot* of water. They use up all one thousand liters of water you had. And when you try to turn them on and there's no agua, they short circuit. And knock out half the goddam electric grid on your shuttle.

I've got no navigation, no - well, nothing. I've got nothing. Pretty much the only thing that's turning on now is this lovely radio receiver. Which means... Game over.

He SIGHS. Slowly. Deeply. Then lets out a small HALF-LAUGH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
After all that crap, I never made it back. I guess I'm never going to talk to... Well, there's a lot I'll never get to do.
(clears his throat)
All right folks, this is it. Good night, and good luck, and take care of yourselves. Oh! Unless this is getting picked up by one of those aliens things that jacked my voice and made Wolf 359 go all Doctor Manhattan Project on us.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
If you're listening... kiss my ass.

This is Doug Eiffel, transmitting from the U.S.S. Horrible Unending Nightmare, signing off.

And with that he pulls away from the controls.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

HERA
Eiffel. Listen to me.

EIFFEL
(soft)
Go away, Hera.

HERA
It's important. There's something you -

EIFFEL
Please stop talking.

HERA
You're not going to die here. There's too much you still have to do. You don't get to go away just yet.

EIFFEL
That is exactly what I get to do. Just... float away.

HERA
It's going to be hard.

EIFFEL
Hera...

HERA
And it's going to be scary, but... you're going to get through this. Everything is going to be okay.

EIFFEL
(snaps)
Go away! I don't want to talk to anyone right now!

KEPLER
(over comms)
Uhh, say again, U.S.S. Horrible Unending Nightmare?

It's a new voice, one we've never heard before. We'll get to know it very well.

EIFFEL
I said go away! I don't want to talk to anyone right now!

BEAT.

KEPLER
Well, all right, but we have received your mayday and thought you might like a hand. Do you copy?

EIFFEL
Oh my God, why is it so hard for you people to -

And that's when he realizes what's happening.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh my God.
(rushing towards the control)
Yes! Yes, yes, yes! Umm, yes! Hello, I copy! This is the U.S.S. Horrible... Whatever I Said Earlier! I copy loud and clear! Who is this? Do you have a lock on my position?

KEPLER
Affirmative. Stand by for coupling process.

And at that moment various pieces of MACHINERY WHIRR TO LIFE, as the shuttle begins interlocking with another, much larger spacecraft.

For a few moments the machinery just runs its course. Then, with an ECHOING THUD, the shuttle's AIRLOCK ENGAGES. A few moments later, the shuttle's exterior HATCH slowly CRANKS AND CREAKS OPEN.

And that's when Eiffel first lays eyes on COLONEL WARREN KEPLER.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Well, well, well... Communications Officer Doug Eiffel. You're a long way from Wolf 359, aren't you?

EIFFEL
What? Who are... How do you know...?

KEPLER
Easy, easy... I know you've been through a lot, but don't worry. Everything is going to okay.

We're here to take you home.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 30.

WOLF 359

"SÉCURITÉ"

by

Gabriel Urbina

(Writer's Note: The following takes place on Day 864 of the Hephaestus Mission)

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 1400 HOURS

We come in on the STEADY HUM of a ship's engine. There's various BEEPS and DINGS from a control console.

Sharp-eared listeners might notice that things sound considerably sleeker and smoother than what we're used to.

Someone TYPES into a console, and hits a SWITCH. There's a discrete burst of STATIC, followed by -

JACOBI
Sécurité, sécurité, sécurité. U.S.S. Hephaestus Station, this is the U.S.S. Urania. Be advised that we are on an intercept vector. Request you avoid any course corrections or exterior activity. Please advise your intentions.

He hits a BUTTON. For a BEAT he just awaits the reply.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Still no reply, sir. You *really* think someone's alive in there? I mean... look at that thing. It's only duct tape and sheer stubbornness keeping it together.

KEPLER
No. They're there. Rebroadcast, and transmit the command authentication codes.

JACOBI
Aye-aye.
(hits the radio switch)
Sécurité, sécurité, sécurité. U.S.S. Hephaestus, this is the U.S.S. Urania. I say again: we are on an approach vector to your current position. Authentication code: Victor-Uniform-Lima-Charlie-Alpha-November. Please advise your intentions.

BEAT. And then - KRRRCH!

MINKOWSKI
(over radio receiver)
U.S.S. Urania, this is Hephaestus Actual. Continue on current course, and use vector zero one decimal nine for your final approach.

JACOBI
Copy that, Hephaestus Actual. It's been a long trip. Please tuck our bunny slippers next to the fire so they'll be nice and warm for us.

MINKOWSKI
... what?

JACOBI
Never mind. Zero one decimal nine is selected. Over and out.

Jacobi hits a SWITCH and turns off the radio receiver. He turns towards the other figure with him.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Whelp. Guess I owe you a beer.

KEPLER
Get us ready for docking, Jacobi.

JACOBI
Aye, aye, sir.

And as Jacobi makes the necessary adjustments, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 30 MINUTES LATER

WAA! WAA! The docking bay's WARNING ALARM BLARES through the loudspeakers. Behind the closed hatches, METAL CREAKS and CLANGS. A moment later, AIR POPS and HISSES.

And finally, we get MECHANICAL WHIRRING as the MAIN AIRLOCK DOOR engages and opens.

And that's when a pair of GUNS are COCKED, and two groups of people come face to face.

On one side, we have Minkowski (armed), Lovelace (armed), and Hilbert. On the other -

KEPLER
You can put down your weapons. We're unarmed, and we don't bite.

MINKOWSKI
Sorry, not happening. It's been a long... two years. We're not taking any chances.

KEPLER
Well, suit yourselves. Lieutenant Renée Minkowski, I presume?

MINKOWSKI
Who's asking?

KEPLER
That'd be a yes, then. My name is Warren Kepler. I work for Goddard Futuristics, SI5. Whenever you feel comfortable putting down your firearm, it would be a privilege to shake your hand.

MINKOWSKI
Why are you here?

A voice from behind Kepler -

JACOBI
Oh, sun tanning opportunities. We heard that Wolf 359 is <u>really</u> beautiful this time of year, and we just had to check it out.

Kepler SMIRKS.

KEPLER
This sarcastic ray of sunshine is Special Operative Daniel Jacobi, SI5. He's my administrative officer and good right hand.

JACOBI
You're too kind, sir.

KEPLER
We're here to help, Lieutenant. Here to help.

Kepler looks around and his gaze falls on -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Doctor Hilbert. Good to see you again.

HILBERT
Major Kepler.

KEPLER
Colonel, actually. Recent development. How's the work?

HILBERT
Complicated.

KEPLER
I'm sure. I look forward to hearing the details.

He moves past Hilbert, and arrives at -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And... what have we here? A new recruit?

MINKOWSKI
Not... exactly.

LOVELACE
Captain Isabel Lovelace. I was the commander - and only survivor - of the previous Hephaestus Mission.

Kepler stares at Lovelace evenly. Oh boy, this is going to take some expl-

KEPLER
Charmed. Pleasure to make your acquaintance.

He smiles at her, nods his head a bit, and moves off.

Minkowski and Lovelace exchange alarmed looks. Wait, what?

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Personnel files for this mission say that the automated functions of the station are handled by an MX500 Class Adjutant Program, Sensus Series?

HERA
She tends to prefer, "Hera." It's less of a mouthful.

KEPLER
I'll keep that in mind. Thank you.
(beat)
Lieutenant. Doctor. Captain. Hera. On behalf of Goddard Futuristics, I want to commend you for all of your hard work. I know that your time here has been challenging, but you've done something really formidable with -

LOVELACE
Spare us. The last thing we need is head-patting from Goddard's PR department.

KEPLER
Lieutenant, Captain... any chance we could speak with the two of you? Alone?

LOVELACE
I don't think so.

MINKOWSKI
Anything you want to say to us you can say in front of our crew, Colonel.

Unseen by most, there's some movement behind Kepler.

HERA
Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Hang on, Hera.

KEPLER
There's some... sensitive information that might be best discussed behind -

LOVELACE
What part of, "No," did you not understand?

HERA
Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Not now, Hera. Colonel, I understand the need for discretion, but after everything we've been through -

KEPLER
Well, that's exactly what I'd like to discuss.

HERA
No, really - <u>Commander</u>.

MINKOWSKI
What, Hera? What?

HERA
Look.

Minkowski, Lovelace, and Hilbert all look around, unsure of what Hera is referring to.

And then they see him. Jaws drop.

EIFFEL
Hey gang.
(beat)
So... yeah. Not dead.
(beat, flat)
Whoo.

HERA
O-officer Eiffel? Is... Is that really... ?

EIFFEL
Yeah, it's really me. I missed you too, Hera.

LOVELACE
Are... are you okay? You look - what did they -

EIFFEL
It's cool, Cap'n. And *they* didn't do anything. Trust me, I'd look a lot worse if they hadn't found me.

MINKOWSKI
You... found him?

JACOBI
The tag on his collar had this address on it. We thought you might like to have him back.

KEPLER
And maybe the fact that we've delivered your missing crew member back home - relatively safe and sound - could be seen as proof that we don't mean you any harm?

There's a LONG BEAT - and then the sound of Minkowski HOLSTERING HER GUN.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
That's the spirit. Now, I'm sure there's some...
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
heartwarming reunions that need to happen, but before I let you get to that, the five of us need to talk.

LOVELACE
Five?

KEPLER
Sure. Officer Eiffel should come along. We'll need him to connect some of the dots.

There's a BEAT. Lovelace and Minkowski look at each other.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Let's talk.

KEPLER
Excellent. Please, step into my office.

And as the various men and women begin to move, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - KEPLER'S QUARTERS - 15 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski, Lovelace, and Eiffel are gathered together. Kepler presides, while Jacobi hovers by the door.

KEPLER
Welcome on board the U.S.S. Urania. Malleable carbon nanotube casing, adjustable multi-purpose infrastructure, and our first working VX5 prototype engine. Prettiest ship in the fleet.

EIFFEL
Next you're going to tell me it can make the Kessel Run in less than twelve parsecs.

LOVELACE
(low, to Minkowski)
Jesus... it really <u>is</u> Eiffel.

Kepler CHUCKLES.

KEPLER
I like this man. I'd keep a closer eye on him if I were you, Lieutenant.

A PANEL SLIDES OPEN, and we hear a SLIGHT CLINK.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I know that having to drink it through a straw will take away from the effect, but I trust you will join me in a drink?

MINKOWSKI
I'm not -

KEPLER
Please, Lieutenant. It's Balvenie Single Malt. 30 years. I would be criminally insulted if you refused.

As Kepler begins TINKERING WITH GLASSES -

MINKOWSKI
Colonel, as much as we appreciate your... hospitality, we really need to know what's going on. I hope you don't mind if I jump right in.

KEPLER
By all means.

MINKOWSKI
Are you here to... why are you here? What is your mission?

KEPLER
We are here because about ninety days ago our base of operations at Cape Canaveral got an SOS message via our pulse beacon relay. A message that <u>you</u> sent, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
Why didn't you respond? Why didn't you let us know you were coming?

KEPLER
We did. Mr. Cutter spent a whole week trying to open communications with the station, but he never managed to get a stable uplink.

JACOBI
Best guess? There's a problem with your pulse beacon relay's receptor. Either that or the radioactive soup Wolf 359's been spitting out has been running too much interference.

KEPLER
When a week went by and he didn't hear from you, Mr. Cutter decided to send in the cavalry. Asked me to put together a crew post-post-haste, and gave us the Urania to get up here. Spared no expense.

LOVELACE
How humanitarian of you...

KEPLER
Hey, happy to be of assistance.
(distributing glasses)
Lieutenant. Captain. Officer.

EIFFEL
No, thanks.

KEPLER
Mmm, more's the pity. Well ladies... here's to new friends.

CLINK. Kepler, Lovelace, and Minkowski drink. Afterwards, Lovelace and Minkowski EXHALE DEEPLY.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You two look like you needed that.

MINKOWSKI
I'd... forgotten what that tasted like.

LOVELACE
What about Eiffel? How did you find him?

JACOBI
Luck, mostly. We were just about to clear the Hermes airspace when we noticed something on our deep range scans. At first it looked like a glitch, but eventually we realized it was an unidentified spacecraft that was *almost* on an intercept course with the Hermes Station.

MINKOWSKI
On intercept course with -
(to Eiffel)
How did you do that?

EIFFEL
The <u>hard</u> way.

LOVELACE
What does that mean? And what happened to you? You look -

KEPLER
It's a thrilling story of adventure and survival. Really, it's super inspirational and very moving. Isn't it, Jacobi?

JACOBI
There may have been tears.

KEPLER
But I'm afraid it's gonna have to wait. I have some questions of my own, and we really need a sitrep of what's been going on.

JACOBI
Specifically, we need to know what happened when your star went from an outie to an innie.

MINKOWSKI
That may take a while to explain. The rest of our crew might -

KEPLER
Oh, don't worry about them. The other member of our team will see to them.

MINKOWSKI
The - there's another one?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah. There's another one.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Hilbert is at the bridge, staring at the Urania through the window. There is a profound frown on his face.

HILBERT
Hera? Progress?

HERA
Mm-mmm. I don't know what that ship's casing is made out of, but none of my scans are getting through. I have no idea what's happening inside that ship.

HILBERT
Mmm.

HERA
Is... that a problem? I mean, we needed *someone* to help us. The fact that it has to be operatives from Command isn't great, but it's better than nothing.

HILBERT
No. Something isn't right here. These are SI5 agents.

HERA
What does that mean?

HILBERT
Strategic Intelligence Division, Section 5. They do Goddard's black operations work. Very confidential, very secretive. These are Cutter's top men. Handpicked. And Kepler...

HERA
He recognized you. Have you worked together?

HILBERT
Once. Briefly.

HERA
He's a problem?

HILBERT
Aside from Cutter, Warren Kepler is the most dangerous man you will ever meet.

MAXWELL
Oh, I don't about that. He's not *that* scary.

HILBERT
(startled)
Ahhh!

Hilbert spins around. Behind him, inputting data into an ipad-like device, is ALANA MAXWELL.

MAXWELL
Sorry, didn't mean to interrupt. Or spook. Just... hi. Very nice to meet you.

HILBERT
... pleasure. I am Doctor Alexander Hilbert, the station's chief science officer.

MAXWELL
Umm, that's... very nice. Sure. But, uh, *as I was saying*, it's very nice to meet you.

It takes them a second to realize what's happening.

HERA
Oh! You mean... right, sorry. Very nice to meet you too.

MAXWELL
It's, Hera... right?

HERA
That's right. And you are...

MAXWELL
Maxwell. Doctor Alana Maxwell. Pleasure.

HERA
It's... nice to meet you.

HILBERT
Yes. Charming. What are you doing?

MAXWELL
Oh, I'm just taking a quick look-see at the specs for your central data processor.

HILBERT
Why?

MAXWELL
Just want to see if I can integrate the data stream into the Urania's central feed.

HILBERT
Why?

MAXWELL
I'm trying to model out the way your navigational support data parses your orbital trajectory.

HILBERT
Why?

Maxwell looks up from her device.

MAXWELL
(slightly impatient)
Don't worry about it. It's a little complicated, you wouldn't get it.

This may, quite frankly, be the greatest insult that anyone's ever given Hilbert.

HILBERT
I wouldn't get it?

At that moment, the LIGHTS over Hilbert and Maxwell start FLICKERING.

MAXWELL
Something wrong with your lights?

HERA
Sorry. Our modulator's been getting power fluctuations all week.

MAXWELL
Oh, hang on.

She hops onto a computer terminal, and TYPES in a few commands. A second later, the screen lights up with a steady stream of characters and figures.

Maxwell's eyes dart back and forth, taking it all in with a surgeon's precision.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
(typing)
Let's try... skipping every third reset of the regulator's command line. And rerouting five percent back to the distributor.

HILBERT
Wait, Hera, don't listen to -

But almost instantaneously, the lights STOP FLICKERING. In fact, the entire environment seems to HUM more smoothly and easily.

MAXWELL
How's that?

HERA
That's much better. Thank you. How did you -

MAXWELL
Oh, it's nothing. The Sensus 200's electrical distribution code is a *nightmare*. I've been trying to find a way to optimize that, but there's only so much that you can do before you're just overclocking the hardware and the entire circuity grid's on - okay now you're staring. What?

HILBERT
What is your PhD in, Doctor?

MAXWELL
Machine Computations. Why?

HERA
You're... an A.I. developer.

MAXWELL
And I build pretty awesome battle drones on the weekends. Is there a problem?

HERA
No, of course not! And thank you for the help. It's just...

HILBERT
Why would Command send an artificial intelligence specialist on a rescue mission?

MAXWELL
Rescue mission?
(beat)
Who said anything about a *rescue* mission?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - KEPLER'S QUARTERS - 1600 HOURS

Kepler, Lovelace, Eiffel, Minkowski, and Jacobi, still together. Minkowski has been talking.

MINKOWSKI
And that's more or less everything. Since the event the star's been pretty much nominal.

EIFFEL
So E.T. hasn't phoned home again?

MINKOWSKI
No, Eiffel. We only got the one transmission.

LOVELACE
We've been running every radio and spectral scanner we had on it, but it's been radio silence. The star stayed big and blue and angry, but... whoever they were, they're holding their peace.

EIFFEL
Damn.

KEPLER
It sounds like you folks have had a heck of a ride.

MINKOWSKI
That's an understatement, Colonel. We're all going to be very happy to leave this place.

BEAT. Kepler and Jacobi look at each other.

KEPLER
"Leaving?" Lieutenant, who, *exactly*, is doing this leaving?

A wave of horror hits Eiffel, Minkowski, and Lovelace simultaneously.

MINKOWSKI
<u>We</u> are.

KEPLER
You are? Jacobi?

JACOBI
That's news to me, sir.

KEPLER
Yeah... leaving, leaving, leaving... no, I can't say that I remember Mr. Cutter saying anything about anyone leaving. No, I think we're all staying here. For a nice, long while.

LOVELACE
You said -

KEPLER
I said that we're here to *help*. Specifically, we're here to help you with phase two of the Hephaestus Mission.

LOVELACE
Phase <u>what?</u>

EIFFEL
Screw that.

KEPLER
Settle down. This isn't up for discussion.

MINKOWSKI
You're damn right it's not. This surreal nightmare is over.

KEPLER
Oh? Why's that?

MINKOWSKI
A million reasons. For starters, we don't have the supplies to -

KEPLER
The Urania's got a hold <u>full</u> of supplies. Should last us for an additional 500 days, even with Captain Lovelace's unexpected mouth to feed.

LOVELACE
The station's full of stress fractures. It's not going to last another week and -

KEPLER
Like I said: malleable casing. Adjustable infrastructure. We're remodeling.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You're going to love the new Hephaestus.
(beat)
Anything else?

EIFFEL
Yes, there's something else: your boss is an insane psychopath! Look, I'm sorry if this is news to the two of you, but Cutter is a murderous fruit loop. I don't know what "I Want to Believe" plans he's got now that we're orbiting around Alf 359, and I don't care. What I care about is the fact that he had me pumped full of Not So Red Bull! I care about the fact that he left Captain Lovelace lost in space for three years! I care about the fact that he's told Hilbert to kill... like everyone ever! Command doesn't give a crap about what happens to any of us!

BEAT.

KEPLER
And?

There's a BEAT for everyone's indignant disbelief.

EIFFEL
And?

And then he gets it.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You already knew.
(looks at Jacobi)
Both of you already knew.

JACOBI
Yeah. All of us did.

EIFFEL
And you don't <u>care</u>? What's <u>wrong</u> with you?

KEPLER
What do you think is happening here, Officer Eiffel? I mean... look at where you are. End of the known universe. We're at the frontier, and we're pushing.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
We are expanding every kind of science known to man. You gotta break a couple of eggs to make that omelette? Cost of doing business. And I'm sorry if you kids got your feelings hurt just because we play rough, but that doesn't mean you get to go home early. Nobody cares. We're staying focused on the big picture.

He CHUCKLES.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And you... well, not only did you not die - congratulations, well done, good on you - but you sons of bitches might have actually found the *ginormous* picture. Which means we need you to help us figure out what's going on with that star. And when we know where those transmissions are coming from, when we have better intelligence than a vague mention buried in a save-our-sorry-ass-souls message, when, in short, you've done your jobs like *grown ups*... **then** you can go home.
(beat)
Amateur hour's over, folks. You're under new management. Get with the program.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
And if we don't?

Eiffel and Minkowski turn to look at Lovelace. Her eyes flash dangerously.

But Kepler turns away from her. He picks up the bottle of scotch again. Considers it for a moment.

KEPLER
I like this scotch. A lot. I like the taste. I like the smell. I like the feel of it in my hand.

LOVELACE
Is there a point to this?

KEPLER
Yes, and you're missing it. Here's the thing: end of a long day at work? I want to have this bottle of whiskey. It will make my life better. But if it started to get in the way of my work, I could get rid of it and things would be... well, they'd be more or less *fine*. I'd be sad, but life would go on.
(beat)
You all? You're whiskey. You're a nice to have. But nothing more than that.

MINKOWSKI
Is that a threat?

JACOBI
Winner winner. Let's get a prize for the smart lady.

LOVELACE
I hope you don't think we'd go down without a fight.

JACOBI
Oh, we don't think that at all. It's just that we know we would win.

KEPLER
I don't think I ever introduced you to Mr. Jacobi's principal function. He designs ballistic missiles, very large ones, but in his spare time he has a real affinity for close quarters explosives.

JACOBI
Heck, how long has it been since we docked? Forty minutes?

KEPLER
More than enough time for Doctor Maxwell to have linked up to the autopilot mainframe. One word from us, and she'll have your A.I. friend pull the O2 from whatever room you're in. No fuss.

EIFFEL
Hera would ne -

KEPLER
Hera would not have a choice. But you do. Work with us. Don't make us do something we don't want to.

His gaze flickers back and forth between the three very angry people in front of him.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Tell you what... have the night off. Get settled back in. We'll get to work tomorrow. Deal?

They stare at him, impotent in their defiance. Finally, Eiffel turns towards the door.

EIFFEL
Come on. Let's get out of here, Commander.

JACOBI
You can stop calling her that anytime, you know.

EIFFEL
What?

JACOBI
Colonel Kepler is her superior officer. He will be assuming Command over the Hephaestus.

KEPLER
And Mr. Jacobi will be acting as my executive officer and second-in-command.

JACOBI
Lieutenant Minkowski will be handling the post of... what? Navigations Officer?

KEPLER
And she'll be a damn fine one, I'd say.

EIFFEL
Like hell.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, forget it.

EIFFEL
You don't get to just come in here and -

MINKOWSKI
Drop it. It's not worth it.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Jacobi... Please show our guests back to the Hephaestus proper. On your way out, swing by the hold, get them a supply package. Something nice. Meat. Coffee grounds. Maybe some toothpaste.

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Lieutenant, Captain, pleasure to meet you both. I look forward to working with you.

After a tense moment, Jacobi ushers the disgruntled trio out, and the door SHUTS behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1900 HOURS

Eiffel is alone at one of the computers.

A DOOR OPENS. Eiffel looks up.

EIFFEL
Hey. Alone at last, huh, Commander?

For a LONG BEAT they just look at each other. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So... how have you been? How was your summer? Mine was <u>fun</u>.
(beat)
How's the wife? The kids?
(beat)
Looks like business is booming. New customers coming in, setting shop, taking over your store.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Fortunately you've still got that market on one hundred percent blue sunsets totally cornered, because if you didn't then we might really - ooof!

And he gets the wind knocked straight out of him, as suddenly Minkowski grabs him and hugs him, tears silently streaming down her face.

MINKOWSKI
(tiny)
Shut up. Just... stop talking.

EIFFEL
I missed you too, Commander. I missed you too.
(beat)
Okay. Air. Air flow is still a thing that's important.

MINKOWSKI
Right, right.

She lets go.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Sorry. I don't what -

EIFFEL
(coughing)
Hey, it's all right. Don't apologize for hugging. I'm glad to see you too, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
You heard the new boss, you don't need to call me that anymore.

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah, they can go screw themselves. The entire universe will freeze before you're not the Commander of the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
Well that's... very gallant in a kind of horrible, crude way. But Eiffel, what are we going to do?

At that moment a DOOR OPENS -

LOVELACE
Ah, they're in here.

- and Lovelace and Hilbert enter.

EIFFEL
Captain.
(then - umm?)
... Doctor?

HILBERT
Good to see you, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Umm, how come he's not locked up in the observation deck?

MINKOWSKI
(don't start)
Never mind *that*. Could we please focus?

EIFFEL
Right, right. Anyone have any ideas about what to do about our latest and greatest problems?

LOVELACE
Yeah. We cooperate with those stooges. Go along with whatever plans Colonel Klink is setting up, learn what we can. Then, the moment they get comfortable, we hit them over the head with something large and heavy, transfer Hera's personality to their shuttle's computer system, and blast the hell out of dodge.

HERA
Easy, Captain. Lieutenant Minkowski's still the one who gives the marching orders.
(beat)
But that *does* sound like a fantastic plan.

HILBERT
Won't work.

Everyone's heads turn towards Hilbert.

MINKOWSKI
Doctor?

EIFFEL
Something about our new playmates you'd like to share with the rest of the class?

HILBERT
These are not the people that you catch off guard. They are Goddard Futuristics elite, and if Kepler is here, it is because Mr. Cutter is taking a personal interest in the runnings of this station.

MINKOWSKI
Colonel Kepler. Who is he?

HILBERT
I worked with him. On the previous Hephaestus Mission.

LOVELACE
No, you didn't.

HILBERT
I *did*. Towards the end of our time together I contacted Command, informed them that mission termination would soon be... advisable. For the last fifty days of our time here, there was a recovery squadron on standby, supervising matters. Kepler was the head of that team. You knocked me out and departed. By the time I woke up, he was already on board, and he had taken control of the station. He was in charge of my debriefing. He was the one who told me that your shuttle had been consumed by the star.

EIFFEL
So he lied to you.

LOVELACE
And he knows what really happened to me.

MINKOWSKI
That's why he wasn't surprised to see you today.

HILBERT
Kepler is never surprised. He is a master tactician, better than anyone other than Cutter. This is his territory, and you are not going to outsmart him.

HERA
Try us. You would have said the same thing when we were trying to stop you. If Lieutenant Minkowski wants to go against them, I'll be right behind her.

HILBERT
No, you will not.

HERA
How can you -

HILBERT
Because that's the second time you've called her "Lieutenant."

There's a BEAT as that sinks in.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Did you even notice? The A.I. Specialist's handiwork, no doubt. This is how SI5 works: quickly, efficiently, *quietly*. You won't see them coming, not until it is far too late. So, if you want to stay alive, I recommend keeping your emotions in check and not doing anything rash. Otherwise, we are all, as Officer Eiffel would put it... *totally screwed.*

For a moment everyone just takes all of that in. Then, finally -

EIFFEL
Well, this is going to be interesting.

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"CONTROLLED DEMOLITION"

by

Gabriel Urbina

START EPISODE 32:

No opening credits yet. Instead, we go right into:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - CREW QUARTERS - 0500 HOURS

There's a BURST OF STATIC as the PA system engages.

HERA
Reveille, reveille. All hands heave out and trice up.

We hear her words booming in adjacent rooms - it's a ship-wide announcement.

After a moment the DOOR OPENS.

EIFFEL
(yawning)
Yeah, yeah. Good morning to you too, Hera.

HERA
(still in PA mode)
Apologies for the - Whoa, one moment, please.

We hear something CLICK through the loudspeakers, then, in her in-doors voice:

HERA (CONT'D)
Apologies for the formality, Officer Eiffel. New regulations.

EIFFEL
(still suuuper sleepy)
Sure, sure. Where's muster today?

HERA
Are... are you sure that you're ready to be back on rotation?

EIFFEL
I'll be fine.

HERA
I know Doctor Hilbert said your condition is stable, but your body still needs -

EIFFEL
Hera?
(slowly)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'll... Be... **Fine.** Okay? I appreciate the concern, but the last thing I need is *another* day contemplating my lack of fingernails. Any more of that I'll start to go Howard Hawks by way of Travis Bickle. You know what I'm saying?

HERA
I have absolutely no idea. I'm *really* glad you're back.

EIFFEL
Me too, baby.

Eiffel OPENS ANOTHER DOOR, leading into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY

EIFFEL
And besides, the sooner we get back to normal, the better - WHOA!

JACOBI
MAKE A HOLE! OUT OF THE WAY!

Eiffel pushes himself backward just in time to avoid Jacobi as he rockets down the hallway.

EIFFEL
What the hell was - AHH!

MAXWELL
Coming through!

And again as Maxwell darts through, hot on Jacobi's heels. She spins around as she goes.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Sorry Eiffel! Tiny bit of a rush. Just dealing with a bit of a... grenade.

EIFFEL
<u>Grenade</u>?

MAXWELL
Don't worry, it's under control! Well, probably. Well, *maybe*.

JACOBI
(from the next room)
Maxwell!

MAXWELL
Gottagotalktoyoulaterbye!

And then they're gone. Eiffel blinks.

HERA
What were you saying about normal?

EIFFEL
Yeah... Never mind.

And with that, we go into our -

OPENING TITLES

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CREW QUARTERS - 0900 HOURS

Several days later. Eiffel is in his quarters. The Comms go off with a BUZZER. He hits the panel.

EIFFEL
Talk to me.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Eiffel. Are you busy?

EIFFEL
Very. So extraordinarily busy with some... indescribably *important* things that are vital to -

MINKOWSKI
Good. Keep it that way.

EIFFEL
No, really Commander, I'm in the middle of some -
(bwah?)
Wait, come again?

MINKOWSKI
Is there a problem?

EIFFEL
Yes? You aren't badgering me into some mind-numbing drudgery.

MINKOWSKI
And?

EIFFEL
Aaand that means I've wandered into Topsy-Turvy-Land? Up is down, black is white, and any second now Hilbert is going to show signs of human emotion.

MINKOWSKI
Ho-ho-ho. Very funny. Listen: Kepler is looking for you.

EIFFEL
Oh goody. What does Colonel Blimp want *now*? Isn't nine days of repairs call at 0600 enough torture?

MINKOWSKI
Apparently not. He's handing out new work assignments, so make yourself scarce.

EIFFEL
Aye-aye, Commander. What's he got you doing?

KEPLER
(also through comms)
Something indescribably important, isn't that right, Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
(gritted teeth)
Yes, Colonel.

KEPLER
I hope you don't mind me breaking into your frequency. Eiffel, are you busy?

EIFFEL
Yes.

KEPLER
Of course you are. And you're about to find out what with. Now that we've gotten your station's infrastructure patched up, I'm doing a bit of tactical assessment.

EIFFEL
Oh?

KEPLER
Starting with a comprehensive review of the Hephaestus crew.

EIFFEL
Oh.
(disguised cough)
Warningwouldabeennice.

MINKOWSKI
(tight whisper)
I tried.

EIFFEL
(clears throat)
So, uh... what are we doing for my evaluation? Tell me it doesn't involve a physical.

KEPLER
Oh, no, no, you don't understand, Officer Eiffel. You're excused from the evaluation.

EIFFEL
... what?

KEPLER
You survived for over 200 days on a non-functional craft, making expert use of limited resources and advanced technology. I have full confidence in your abilities.

There is a LONG BEAT for whatever stupid faces Eiffel and Minkowski are both making.

EIFFEL
... thank you?

KEPLER
Not at all, you've earned that. Unlike some *other* people.

MINKOWKSI
I keep telling you, it's not my -

KEPLER
I'm sorry, did I ask for your opinion, *navigations officer*?

MINKOWSKI
(I will destroy your family)
No...

KEPLER
Exactly.

EIFFEL
What is she doing for her review?

KEPLER
Lieutenant Minkowski is working from the observation deck today. She's trying to fill in some pretty alarming holes that exist in your navigational logs for some reason.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. It's almost like whoever had the job of updating our star charts never actually did it...

EIFFEL
What about me?

KEPLER
Doctor Maxwell is going to be doing the synthetic crew evaluation for your AI friend. It's very straightforward, but Doctor Maxwell can be... easily distracted. I need someone to make sure she finishes the survey by E.O.D., and I think you're the man for the job.

There's a SCOFF over the loudspeaker.

MINKOWSKI
Really? Colonel, is this a... prudent course of action?

EIFFEL
Hey! It's a great course of action.

MINKOWSKI
You are going to depend on Eiffel - <u>Eiffel</u> - to make sure that someone gets something done on time?

EIFFEL
Hey! He can totally depend. One tech survey, well done, hold the mustard, coming right up. Thirty minutes or test results are free.

KEPLER
I'm afraid we don't have a lot of choice in the matter. I'll be busy carrying out Captain Lovelace's evaluation.

MINKOWSKI
What about Jacobi?

KEPLER
Mr. Jacobi is... preoccupied at the moment.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HILBERT'S LABORATORY - MEANWHILE

JACOBI
What does this one do?

He is holding up a container of clear fluid. Hilbert quickly reaches in and snatches it away from him.

HILBERT
That is aluminum potassium sulfate solution. Very reactive when -

JACOBI
(re: a new container)
And what about this one?

HILBERT
(put that down!)
Liquid halothane solution. Essential for the -

JACOBI
Uh-huh.
(re: a piece of tech)
And what about this thing?

HILBERT
Ah, ah! That is a bioelectrical pulse oximeter, and it is very, very -

CRUNCH. We hear the sound of CRACKING GLASS.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
- delicate.
(beat)
Mr. Jacobi, there was a full inventory of my laboratory in the manifest I submitted to Colonel Kepler. I think you will find it all to be within regulation. Will there be anything else?

JACOBI
Yes. Lots.

Jacobi picks up a clipboard, starts flipping through some pages.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
What about these... experiments of yours? All within regulation?

HILBERT
I don't see why my experiments are important in the larger -

JACOBI
They're important because me and my very, very official clipboard -
(clicks a pen twice)
- are right here telling you they are.

HILBERT
The Decima Project is my own personal undertaking.

JACOBI
And here I am, personally asking you to *please* tell me the details of all your horrible, murderous experiments. So get talking.

HILBERT
You are a profoundly unpleasant man.

JACOBI
Ooh, careful, you're going to hurt my feelings. And you're one to talk.
(flips through pages)
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
How many of the people you've worked with over the past decade are still alive? Three? Four? If I had your record, I'd be trying real hard to make new friends.

Jacobi FLIPS through the sheets of paper. FLIP. FLIP. FLIP. He stops on a page.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Tell me about these... experimental subjects of yours.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1100 HOURS

Eiffel, Hera, and Maxwell are together. Maxwell is typing something into a computer terminal.

EIFFEL
All right, ladies, ready to do this questionnaire evaluation thing?

HERA
Sure.

MAXWELL
(not looking up)
Yep.

EIFFEL
Great. Doc, you got the first question?

MAXWELL
Mm-hmm.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Uh... Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Mm-hmm.

BEAT. BEAT. Finally, Maxwell blinks, tuning into what is happening.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry. Was I supposed to *actually* be paying attention to what you were saying?

EIFFEL
... yes.
(clears throat)
I was asking if we could get started on the survey.

As Maxwell talks, she continues typing into the terminal.

MAXWELL
What survey?

EIFFEL
What sur - ? The synthetic crew member evaluation survey?

Maxwell lets out a SNORT OF LAUGHTER.

MAXWELL
Oh, oh, *right*. Yes, very funny.
(beat)
Oh God, you're actually serious.

EIFFEL
Yes, I am seri - would you please *stop typing*?

HERA
What are you doing, anyway?

MAXWELL
Installing a new visual imagery processor to go along with your new radiographic perception sensors.

EIFFEL
Well, gee, Doc that sounds really *neat*, but if you could get off Twitter for just a second -

HERA
Hold on. A new imagery processor? So... what are we talking about? Will I be able to see radio waves?

MAXWELL
Oh, that's just for starters. Think big. You'll actually be able to visually map out ionizing radiation.

HERA
That's amazing.

EIFFEL
Uh -

HERA
You can actually do that? You've got that program?

MAXWELL
I *built* that program. And it is totally kick-ass.

EIFFEL
Yes. *Radical*.
(clears throat)
Maybe we could discuss it after -

HERA
But wait, wait - how would that even work?

MAXWELL
Here, hang on.
(types something in)
You see this pathway?

HERA
Uh-huh.

EIFFEL
No, really guys, we really should get cracking on that -

MAXWELL
Okay, now watch what happens when I integrate it with this one.

HERA
Okay...

EIFFEL
Uh...

But he's lost them. They're off in their own little world.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, this might... take slightly longer than I expected.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS URANIA - KEPLER'S QUARTERS - MEANWHILE

Kepler with Lovelace. He FLIPS through her file.

KEPLER
One thousand, one hundred and eighty-three days.
(beat)
Nine-hundred and forty-four during your first mission, then two-hundred and thirty-nine since you joined Minkowski and her crew. That is a very long rotation.

LOVELACE
Yep.

KEPLER
How would you characterize your time on the Hephaestus?

LOVELACE
Difficult.

KEPLER
Care to elaborate?

LOVELACE
Very difficult.

Kepler looks up from his paperwork.

KEPLER
Ah, yes. I forgot you're funny.

LOVELACE
Hilarious. Will that be all?

KEPLER
Is there any particular reason you don't want to discuss your time here?

LOVELACE
Let's just say that I am *very* eager to be a private citizen again.

KEPLER
I can imagine. You know that that's not an option at the moment, right? I've only got the one ride, and I can't exactly let you borrow it.

LOVELACE
Not even if I ask you **really** nicely?

BEAT. Kepler SNAPS the file shut. The air around him seems to darken.

KEPLER
Captain. I hope that you can appreciate how your being here makes my life more complicated. You have no official role, no official responsibilities. Going by your own account, I could arrest you for subverting the chain of command and no one would bat an eye. You're an unknown variable... and I hate those.

He considers her. For a LONG BEAT Lovelace just waits. Where is he going with this?

Finally -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Do you like chess?

LOVELACE
I - what?

KEPLER
Chess? You? Me?

He PULLS a box off the wall and OPENS it up, revealing a magnetic chess set.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Now? Would you prefer black or white?

LOVELACE
I'm not -

KEPLER
No? I'll take white then.

PLUNK. As Kepler sets the first piece on the board, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 0200 HOURS

HERA
No, no, no. You'd never be able to get enough processing power to pull that off.

Maxwell's still at the computer terminal, talking to Hera. A few feet behind them, Eiffel. Hating everything in the universe.

MAXWELL
You'd be **fine.** You just need an extra cycle every third rotation.

EIFFEL
(I hate you both so much)
Right...

HERA
No. You're *never* going to get enough storage space to cycle through all the data.

MAXWELL
No, you don't store it! You use a selective information hierarchy matrix!

EIFFEL
Yeah. *Duh*.

HERA
All right, *fine*. I'll give you that one, but you're not going to be able to build an array that can access data quickly enough.

MAXWELL
Hah! Watch me. I can put together a -

EIFFEL
(snapping)
OKAY.
(beat)
As... **great** as the past... *three* hours have been... could we *please* turn our attention towards the crew member survey?

BEAT. Then -

MAXWELL
(snapping her fingers)
Oh! I should show you the program that these two guys at Cambridge are working on. It's basically a combination of Kung-Fu Chess and Hostage Chess...

And off they go again. Eiffel GROANS, exasperated to his very core.

EIFFEL
(sotto)
God, what have I done to offend you...?

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Middle management going well, then?

EIFFEL
Commander? How long have you been listening in?

MINKOWSKI
Hera patched me through about half an hour go. I needed a distraction.

EIFFEL
Navigational data's not the heart-pounding rollercoaster we were hoping for?

MINKOWSKI
No. I'm having to manually go through every single mission entry. And here's the worst part: they could automatically reconstruct all this data with the systems they have on the Urania. The only reason why I'm here is because the *Colonel* wants to put me through the paces.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Gee. I, uh, wonder what that feels like. Sounds... sounds *awful*.

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

EIFFEL
Best of luck, Commander. Godspeed.

He hits the Comms Panel. BUZZER. He turns his attention back towards:

MAXWELL
No, it'll be fine, the secondary cooling system won't even have to kick in unless you -

Eiffel CLEARS HIS THROAT LOUDLY. Maxwell turns to look at him.

EIFFEL
Hera, could we, uh, side bar for a moment?

HERA
Umm... if it's -

MAXWELL
Yeah, it's fine. I'll run and grab the drive with the demo version of the Sensus 300 O.S. Back in a sec.

A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES as Maxwell exits. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
What. The Hell. Are you doing!?

HERA
What?

EIFFEL
No, don't "what" me. Why are you being so chummy with Doctor Robotnik?

HERA
It's... she's fine, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
"Fine"? She's here to scramble your brains and turn you into Command's sock puppet. **Again.** Have you forgotten your little linguistic upgrade?

HERA
You're overreacting.

EIFFEL
No, I'm reacting the **exact right amount.**
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You, on the other hand, are being way too laid-back about Henrietta Pym rewriting your personality!

HERA
That's not what she's doing. Everything we've talked about is strictly operational. She's not going anywhere near my personality matrix.

EIFFEL
How long'll that last? Why would they send Cylon Cindy up here if it's not to give you the full Alpha Victor monty?

HERA
You're jumping to conclusions.

EIFFEL
I am taking small, measured steps into conclusions! Why are being so chill?!

MAXWELL
Because I might be able to help with the pain.

Eiffel spins around to find Maxwell, who rejoined them at some point in the preceding.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Because I might be able to make it stop.

EIFFEL
When did you - wait, what? What pain?

HERA
Eiffel...

MAXWELL
Somebody tore a hole in her skull and stapled it shut. Do you think **anyone** would be okay after that?
(beat)
I'd need to take a look at the mainframe itself to do a full diagnosis, but I would guess there's a lot of electro-neurological bleed. At least.
(softer, at Hera)
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I... I wasn't sure about the best way to broach the subject.

HERA
It's okay.

EIFFEL
Wait, wait, wait. You're saying that Hera's been *in pain* ever since Hilbert brought her back?

MAXWELL
No. I am saying that she's been in a state of electroconvulsive feedback. "Pain" is just the closest thing we have to it.

EIFFEL
Hera, why didn't you say anything?

The bitterest CHORTLE OF LAUGHTER comes through the speakers.

HERA
What, with both Lieutenant Minkowski and Captain Lovelace talking about how I couldn't do my job anymore? With all of you thinking that maybe I was too broken, **period**? Right. Lot of good it would have done.
(beat)
Look, there was nothing you could have done.

EIFFEL
You could have told me.

HERA
Well, there's things you wouldn't understand.

EIFFEL
And **she** would?

MAXWELL
Yes. And I can help.
(beat)
Look, it wouldn't even take that long. Completely hardware-based, I won't go anywhere near her software. Scout's honor.
(beat)
Or... should we get going on that questionnaire?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Hera? This really isn't my choice to make. Do you *want* this?

If Hera had lungs, we would hear a colossal SIGH. Instead, there's just a moment of silence, followed by -

HERA
Yes. I am tired of feeling like this. I am **so** tired of being broken.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Grrrrrr... okay, **fine.** One quick surgery, and then we go do the thing we're supposed to be doing. Deal?

And off of that -

CUT TO:

INT. USS URANIA - KEPLER'S QUARTERS - MEANWHILE

Back to Kepler and Lovelace. Well into a match.

KEPLER
But a deadman's sensor? That's a bit of an extreme measure.

PLUNK. He moves a piece.

LOVELACE
Call it insurance. I wanted something in my back pocket when I got back to Earth. In case someone tried something stupid.

PLUNK. She moves a piece. Kepler lets out an APPRECIATIVE WHISTLE.

KEPLER
Hell of a plan.

LOVELACE
I'm still here, aren't I?

KEPLER
No, you're leaving your rook exposed.

PLUNK. He moves.

LOVELACE
Maybe I just want to finish the game.

KEPLER
(shrugs)
If you'd like to forfeit, you're free to go. I think we've about covered everything. Unless *you* want to ask <u>me</u> any questions.

LOVELACE
The only thing I want is to kick your ass at nerd poker.

She SETS a piece down, rather more forcefully than before.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Check.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Huh.

LOVELACE
Didn't see that coming, did you?

KEPLER
Hmm? Oh, no, no, no. It's just that... if I were you, I would be very curious about why we told Hilbert that you were dead.

PLUNK. He moves.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And you should really be more careful with your queen.

Well then.

LOVELACE
You lied to Hilbert. Why would you tell **me** the truth?

KEPLER
Because Hilbert is a slimy, worthless nuisance. He's always been strictly need-to-know, and after a certain point... he didn't need to know.

LOVELACE
But why lie?

KEPLER
When you left the Hephaestus, you became a different department's problem. And I don't need him chasing after loose ends. Not how I do business.

LOVELACE
This isn't *business*, it's my life.

PLUNK. Lovelace moves.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So? What did happen to me?

Kepler SIGHS slowly.

KEPLER
We don't know.

LOVELACE
Your pants are on fire.

KEPLER
Honest. We're playing a whole lot of catch up right now. We know you left, we know you're back. The middle part? Bit of a blur.

PLUNK. He moves.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
But after all the paranormal events you've seen since you got back... the thought hasn't occurred that maybe <u>that's</u> responsible for your little detour?

PLUNK. She moves.

LOVELACE
Check.

PLUNK. He moves.

KEPLER
I'm not asking you to drop any grudges. But right now? All this insanity? It *is* business. And we'll figure out what has been happening a whole lot faster if we all work together.

LOVELACE
Really? You think <u>that's</u> how you're going to get me to come around?

PLUNK. She moves.

KEPLER
Help me help you, Captain. Tell me what you want to do.

LOVELACE
I want to get back to Earth.

KEPLER
Second choice?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Chief of Engineering. Your AI cheerleader doesn't do anything without my say-so.

KEPLER
Not a chance.

She thinks for a BEAT.

LOVELACE
Master-of-Arms. With full autonomy. You actually let me do the job.

PLUNK. He moves.

KEPLER
Okay, okay... I see...

LOVELACE
Going once...

KEPLER
Not exactly a ringing statement of trust, Captain.

LOVELACE
You'll have to earn that. Going twice...

KEPLER
Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay - deal.

LOVELACE
Excellent choice. And Colonel?

PLUNK. She moves.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
That's checkmate.

KEPLER
Good game.

She turns to leave. After a moment we hear the DOOR OPEN.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Captain! I *am* serious. The most powerful and well-funded tech conglomerate in the world has no idea what happened to you. Before you start investigating every single move we make... If it were me? I would **really** like to know where those two years of my life went. Just... something to think about.

The DOOR CLOSES, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 1800 HOURS

The bridge. Maxwell is looking at various bits of hardware around Hera's processor. Occasionally we hear the sounds of MECHANICAL TINKERING.

But our attention's on Eiffel, floating by the Comms pannel, listening to -

MINKOWSKI
(over the comms)
It's completely pointless. It really is.

EIFFEL
(complete autopilot)
Uh-huh.

MINKOWSKI
There is no practical reason to make me go through all this trouble. I could be doing something much more important.

EIFFEL
(not paying even a little bit of attention)
Right, right.

MINKOWSKI
It's just... pointless bureaucracy! Completely unethical! Practically fascist!

EIFFEL
(1000 miles away)
That's nice.

MINKOWSKI
And another thing -

And Eiffel switches off the comms. BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Oy! Gepetto! How's the surgery coming along? How long before you're done?

MAXWELL
Hmm? Done with what?
(beat)
Oh! The mainframe repairs? Yeah, yeah, that went really well.

EIFFEL
"Went"?

MAXWELL
Yeah, we wrapped that up, like, two hours ago.

EIFFEL
Excuse me?

HERA
We've been trying to figure out how to get rid of that -

EIFFEL
No, no.
(beat)
You're **done**? And you didn't tell me? I have been waiting. **All day.** We were supposed to fill out the survey as soon as you were done with the repairs.

MAXWELL
I told you we were forgetting something!

HERA
I'm really sorry, Officer Eiffel. We just caught up in this.

MAXWELL
Look, don't worry about it. I don't think that survey thing's really -

EIFFEL
(voice rising)
I don't care what **you** think! That's not the point!

HERA
Umm, Eiffel, maybe you need to -

EIFFEL
(aaaand... snap)
Maybe I need to **nothing!** I've had it up to here with the two of you. Your commanding officer told you to do something, so we are going to do it! And we're going to do it in a timely, orderly fashion if it kills us! Jesus Christ, what is wrong with you? It's like you've never even read Pryce and Carter! Tip #490 very *clearly* states that -

He trails off. After a BEAT -

HERA
Officer Eiffel?

MAXWELL
You, uh, all right there?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(the horror)
What have I become?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMS ROOM - 2100 HOURS

Eiffel, now wrapped up in a blanket, is next to Lovelace. He is still very clearly shaken.

EIFFEL
... and... it was like an episode of the *Twilight Zone*. I was slowly transforming into Commander Minkowski.

LOVELACE
That sounds... rough.

EIFFEL
It was a nightmare! A terrifying, bureaucratic nightmare!

LOVELACE
Okay, okay... Speaking of, where is Minkowski?

HERA
Still in the observation deck. I've taken the... liberty of muting her comms channel for the time being.

EIFFEL
How are you doing, Hera?

HERA
I'm... great. I haven't felt this good in... ever, really. It's like, all of a sudden everything is in really sharp focus. And it's so easy to think through every part of the station.

LOVELACE
Huh. Well, maybe some good will come of this.

EIFFEL
Yeah. Maybe.

Lovelace catches the dark undercurrent in that mutter.

LOVELACE
Eiffel? Everything okay?

But at that moment, a door OPENS and in comes Colonel Kepler.

KEPLER
Evening, Captain. Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Colonel.

KEPLER
Well, folks: good news. I think we got everything that we needed to out of that little review period. There's just a few... safety liabilities we need to take care of first.

LOVELACE
Liabilities...?

KEPLER
Well, really just one... *big* liability.

He hits a button on a walkie-talkie, which immediately CRACKLES with static.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Jacobi, you are cleared to go. You may fire when ready.

JACOBI
(over walkie-talkie)
Wilco.

Kepler turns back towards Eiffel and Lovelace.

KEPLER
If I could just direct your attention towards the starboard window...

For a moment nothing happens. Then...

KA-BOOM! The station is ROCKED and SHAKES violently from the force of a distant explosion.

EIFFEL
Holy crap! What the - Hera, are you all right?

HERA
I'm - I'm fine. It didn't hit any of the major systems. I...
(slowly realizing)
... I barely even felt that, actually.

KEPLER
Controlled demolition. That wing of the Hephaestus was redundant after our installations. Completely sealed off. Doctor Maxwell made sure that you wouldn't get hurt, Hera.

LOVELACE
But - but why go through the trouble of blowing it up?

KEPLER
That's why.

Eiffel and Lovelace turn back to the window. It takes them a moment, but then they see it.

EIFFEL
Is... is that the plant monster?

KEPLER
Well... it <u>used</u> to be.

Everyone's attention turns back towards Kepler.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
What? You think we didn't know about that thing? *Please*. We listened to every log that you beamed down to Canaveral.

EIFFEL
Then you knew it wasn't doing anything! It wasn't hurting anyone!

KEPLER
Specimen 34 was a failed experiment that compromised crew safety simply by *existing*. We are all here to carry out a very important mission, ladies and gentlemen. And rest assured...
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
We will deal with anything or anyone that puts that mission in jeopardy. It's nothing personal, just... business.

Eiffel and Lovelace exchange a look, then turn back towards the window. Large chunks of debris float past them.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Any questions?

END OF EPISODE 32.

WOLF 359

"DON'T POKE THE BEAR"

by

Sarah Shachat

(Note: This episode takes place on Day 920 of the Hephaestus Mission)

BEGIN EPISODE 33:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS - HILBERT'S LAB - 1300 HOURS

We come in on the sound of MACHINERY HUMMING. For a LONG BEAT there is nothing else. Then -

EIFFEL
(something in his mouth)
How much longer is -

HILBERT
Don't talk.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(more emphatic)
How much lon-

HILBERT
If you don't hold still, we are going to have to start over.

We hear whatever noise of frustration Eiffel can make with a probe in his mouth.

BEAT.

BEAT.

FINALLY - DING! We hear as text fills up a screen.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Very good, Officer Eiffel. You can move again.

He hasn't even finished saying that before we hear Eiffel SPITTING OUT whatever probe was in his mouth.

EIFFEL
Great. Thanks. Can I get my booster shot now? The one that keeps my lungs from exploding? *Again?*

HILBERT
(absorbed in the screen)
Don't be absurd.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I cannot regulate your condition without accurate data. We still have a lot of tests to run.

EIFFEL
What? You said this little check-up would only take an hour!

HILBERT
You have been here six minutes.

As they talk, Hilbert begins putting a blood pressure meter on Eiffel's arm.

EIFFEL
Oh.
(mutter)
Feels like longer...

As the pressure meter begins inflating -

HILBERT
What is the matter, Officer Eiffel? You are here. Voluntarily. Surely you recognize importance of these tests.

EIFFEL
Importance? Sure. Appeal? Not so much. Just because Hera left *her* physical with a sticker and lollipop doesn't mean I'm getting any more gung-ho about your Medical Mystery Tour. I reserve the right to remain disgruntled.

We hear the WHIRR of the pressure meter de-inflating.

HILBERT
Yes, yes, very good..

Hilbert doesn't seem to be registering much of what Eiffel is saying. He is fully engrossed in the notes he's taking as he goes through the check-up.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Hmmm. One hundred and thirty over eighty. Not ideal, but within acceptable parameters.

EIFFEL
Hooray. Let's do this again some other ti -

But Hilbert is back in his face, CLICKING on a FLASHLIGHT.

HILBERT
Open eyes. Very wide.
(beat)
Hmm. Your response to visual stimuli is slower than last examination.

EIFFEL
Sure. Fine. Whatever.

HILBERT
(still testing Eiffel's vision)
Is there problem, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Uh, yeah? It rhymes with Proctor Filbert, and it's looking at me like it'll be disappointed - not *mad*, just disappointed - if I don't start growing Wolverine claws in the next five minutes.

HILBERT
(back to taking notes)
It has been long time since last chance to evaluate current trial. Exciting opportunity. By this point, the Decima samples in your system might have -

EIFFEL
Uhhh, Doc? I know you're pretty far-right brained, but watch your phrasing. This is *not* exciting for me, and it's definitely not an opportunity. I <u>don't care</u> about the new and constantly improving Hilbert Experimental Program, so if you could -

And that's when the DOOR OPENS, and in walks -

KEPLER
Sorry I'm late, gentlemen.

HILBERT
Colonel Kepler? Is there something that you require?

KEPLER
No, no, I'm good.

BEAT. Eiffel and Hilbert stare at Kepler. Finally -

EIFFEL
Umm... Sir? Was there anything that you wanted to tell us? Or... ?

KEPLER
Oh, don't mind me, fellas. I'm just sitting in. You guys do your thing.

Eiffel and Hilbert exchange a glance: huuuh?

HILBERT
Colonel, I am not used to having observers in my laboratory. If you -

KEPLER
I think you mean you're not used to having observers in the medical facility that Goddard Futuristics has *very generously* allowed you to operate out of, Doctor. And since the fitness of one of *my* crew members is being evaluated, I'm sure *you* will not mind making an exception.
(beat)
Unless, Officer Eiffel, if you'd be more comfortable...

EIFFEL
(this is weird)
Uh, no. No it's... cool, Colonel.

KEPLER
Wonderful. Carry on then. You won't even know that I'm here.

Hilbert CLEARS HIS THROAT.

HILBERT
Well... If you would please extend your arm, Officer Eiffel, I need to take -

This is cut by HUGE SLURP of whatever Kepler just drank.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Sorry, sorry. Carry on.

Hilbert lets out a very tense EXHALE.

HILBERT
... take a blood sample. Hold still. One, two -

KEPLER
Remember to hold your breath.

HILBERT
Colonel...

KEPLER
If you hold your breath, that takes a bit of the sting out of it. Just a tip.

EIFFEL
Uh, thanks?

HILBERT
Yes, yes. Hold still, please. One -

EIFFEL
Wait, am I supposed hold my breath just when I get stuck or for the whole thing?

KEPLER
Until right after.

EIFFEL
Until right after the needle goes - OW! Hey!

Hilbert's stuck him.

HILBERT
(shut up, fool)
There. You can breathe now.

KEPLER
Jeez, Doctor! Next time give him a count or something.

HILBERT
(gritted teeth)
I... Yes, Colonel. Thank you.
(beat)
Very good. That should do. Now, while I run this, we can -

KEPLER
And what is this process going to tell us about Officer Eiffel's condition? If you don't mind me asking?

HILBERT
Colonel Kepler, you said before that I would not be able to tell you were here. I can, in fact, detect your presence. Once again, sir, with the greatest respect... What are you doing here?

Kepler's expression darkens.

KEPLER
Doctor. Come here.
(beat)
No, closer.
(beat)
Look at these insignias on my shoulders. The ones that signify my rank. How high is it?

HILBERT
Very high.

KEPLER
And my authority over this station?

HILBERT
(gritted teeth)
Unquestionable.

KEPLER
Exactly. Now look at my face.
(beat)
I'm just here to observe. Is that going to be a problem?

This hangs in the air for a tense BEAT.

HILBERT
No... sir.

KEPLER
Just what I like to hear.

He lightly SLAPS Hilbert's cheeks twice.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Now, get back to work.

HILBERT
(seething)
Very good, sir.

So chastened, Hilbert does, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS URANIA - SERVER ROOM - 1320 HOURS

We hear a BUZZER, the kind that signifies a computing error. Right on its heels, we hear Lovelace GROAN.

HERA
This isn't going to work.

LOVELACE
Yes, it will.

Some MECHANICAL TINKERING, as Lovelace goes back to the circuitry she's been manipulating.

HERA
It's a dead-end. Secure servers aren't the sort of thing that you can force open through sheer resilience. Believe me, I know.

LOVELACE
Well, do you have any helpful suggestions?

HERA
Get out of the Urania? Before someone comes back and finds you trying to break into classified files?

LOVELACE
What fantastic advice. I'm so glad you decided to help, Hera.

HERA
I'm just saying. Colonel Kepler's system is almost as complicated as I am, Captain. Brute force isn't going to cut it.

LOVELACE
Well, I am now taking any and all ideas for how to -

The door OPENS. Lovelace spins around in time to see -

JACOBI
Captain Lovelace.

LOVELACE
Mr. Jacobi. Dr. Maxwell.

MAXWELL
Hi.

LOVELACE
Thanks for that proximity alert, Hera...

HERA
Uh, different spacecraft, remember? I am, in fact, not *everywhere* at once.

JACOBI
Captain... as thrilled as we are to see you, could you please explain what - *exactly* - you are doing next to our primary server?

LOVELACE
Oh, I was just helping Hera.

HERA
Yes. I can confirm Captain Lovelace is being immensely helpful.

MAXWELL
Really? How is she doing that?

LOVELACE
I was helping Hera synch her navigation system with the Urania's...

HERA
Which will allow me to better help Lieutenant Minkowski's progress with our star positioning data.

JACOBI
Really? Because it sure looks - to me in any case - like you're trying to break into Colonel Kepler's private server. What a whacky misunderstanding.

LOVELACE
Mr. Jacobi, that -
(clears throat)
- that would be -

JACOBI
Very, very bad, of course. So it's a good thing you're *not* doing that. And it's *especially* good that you're not doing that with a customizable backend key. Right, Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Yes. *Definitely* don't do it by accessing the keychain's memory drive through the command line.

Lovelace looks from one to the other, deeply confused.

LOVELACE
I'm... I'm not sure what -

MAXWELL
Oh, move over.

And with that, Maxwell SNATCHES Lovelace's toolbox and starts OPENING UP a new part of the server.

LOVELACE
Umm... Jacobi?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm?

LOVELACE
What is happening?

JACOBI
Weren't you paying attention? We're *not* breaking into Colonel Kepler's private archives.

LOVELACE
"We?"

JACOBI
Oh yeah. Maxwell and I have *never* wanted to take a look at the Colonel's classified files.
(snaps fingers)
Try to keep up.

MAXWELL
(focused on her work)
If everyone in the back seat could just be quiet a moment? I'm trying to drive.

Well that was unexpected. As Maxwell works, we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1400 HOURS

Kepler, Hilbert, and Eiffel in the lab.

KEPLER
...and anyway, long story short, that's why we used a pick-up.

HILBERT
Fascinating. Now, Officer Eiffel, based on initial results, I must collect additional samples.

EIFFEL
Uh... Okay?

HILBERT
Is slightly longer procedure.

EIFFEL
Okay.

We hear the WHIRR of a hypodermic and POWER-UP SOUNDS of what sounds like a complicated heart monitor.

HILBERT
Now, hold still while I -

KEPLER
Just a moment, Doctor.

Hilbert GROANS.

HILBERT
Yes, Colonel. Of course.

KEPLER
This machine that you're setting up... what does it do?

Hilbert takes a DEEP BREATH. Give me strength...

HILBERT
This monitor will cycle Officer Eiffel's blood. Gives precise estimate of the amount of Decima Virus in his system.

KEPLER
Uh-huh... And about this... Decima project... How would you characterize the results so far?

BEAT.

HILBERT
It's... very promising, sir. All observable data validates the operational hypotheses at several points, and -

KEPLER
Excuse me, Doctor. "Promising?" Hmm...
(beat)
Yeah, I'm not sure you've got the right word there.

HILBERT
Colonel?

KEPLER
Nah, nah... See, when I hear things like "confirmed fatalities," -

HILBERT
Colonel, it is not so -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
- and "compromised mission intelligence," the word -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
- that comes to mind is **not** satisfactory!
(beat)
Tell me, *exactly* what parts of these experiments have you found so "promising?" The innovative violations of scientific norms? The unsuitable research methodologies? Or - wait! Wait, wait, wait, I know! Maybe it's the unnecessary pain inflicted on Officer Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Yeeeah, there's been *a lot* of that.

HILBERT
Colonel, if I could just -

KEPLER
If you could just *explain*, Doctor? Oh, I am all ears. What, other than some wildly optimistic conjecture, do you have that justifies using the word "promising" within a *light year* of **this FUBAR catastrophe?!**

BEAT as Hilbert tries to formulate an answer.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
This is amazing.

Kepler turns to Eiffel.

KEPLER
Officer Eiffel, I'm going to ask you something I'm not sure anyone has yet. Do you agree to participating in this procedure?

Eiffel looks to Kepler, then to Hilbert.

EIFFEL
I don't know that I have much of a choice, sir.

KEPLER
I'm giving you a choice right now. Say the word and Doctor Hilbert will provide minimally invasive instructions to keep you healthy. And whoever among the rest of the crew you're most comfortable with can carry them out.

HILBERT
What? You cannot simply -

KEPLER
Excuse me? Are you about to tell me what I can't do, Doctor? Finish that sentence. See what happens.

HILBERT
I am not, sir, but my mission cannot -

KEPLER
Your mission? Your mission? At this particular moment, you have one mission. Stop making me ill, that's your mission. Stop making me want to throw up every time you open your mouth to waste my life with more pitiful excuses, that's your mission. And right now, you are **failing** that mission!
(to Eiffel)
You have my word, Eiffel. This happens strictly by your say-so.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
It's... Colonel, it's okay. He can read all the tea leaves he wants, or... whatever it is he's doing.

KEPLER
Very well. Your patient, Doctor.

Hilbert EXHALES sharply.

With the HISS of a needle and a BEEP from the monitor, Hilbert's in business. And we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS URANIA - SERVER ROOM - MEANWHILE

BUZZER! Lovelace, Jacobi, and Maxwell still haven't gotten through Kepler's security system.

JACOBI
For those of you keeping score...

MAXWELL
Why don't you go get some blasting jelly, Jacobi? I'm sure that will help. Oh. Wait.

LOVELACE
You two doing okay over there?

JACOBI
Fine, Captain. This playful teasing is the mark of a *true* SI5 agent. How's the wiring look?

LOVELACE
Better than it did 40 minutes ago, but I can't make sense of this -

MAXWELL
Hold on, let me have a look.
(beat)
Hmm. Here. See if you can just bypass that router.

LOVELACE
I'll try.

Maxwell's eyes dart back and forth, taking in everything Lovelace has patched.

MAXWELL
This is a nice job. Lot better than anything the ballistics dummy over there could put together.

JACOBI
Hey! That's **Mr**. Ballistics Dummy to you all.

MAXWELL
I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that.
(to Lovelace)
How'd you get good at this?

BEAT. Lovelace considers the two of them for a moment.

LOVELACE
Building our escape shuttle. I picked up way more of this kind of thing than I ever thought I could.

MAXWELL
Custom retrofitting a VX. That must have been quite a project.

JACOBI
Ladies, could we maybe dial in on our own breaking-and-entering? Before Colonel Kepler gets back?

LOVELACE
Right.

BEAT as they all resume working and tinkering. Finally -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So... why are the two of you so eager to break into these files? I can't imagine there's a lot that Kepler keeps from you.

MAXWELL
Oh, you'd imagine wrong. Colonel Kepler practically lives by the words "Need to know." And, apparently, nothing I can say will ever convince him that, as an experimental researcher, I "need to know" everything that's in our databanks. *Nooo*, it's always classified *this* and security clearance *that*. I'd kill for five minutes at the archives without all the red tape.

JACOBI
She's being metaphorical, Captain.
(lower)
We hope.

LOVELACE
What about you, Jacobi?

JACOBI
Oh, same reason I do anything, really: to see if I can.

Maxwell lets out a tiny SNORT. She leans closer to Lovelace.

MAXWELL
(whisper)
And if he can get a look at the personnel reports to see what Kepler *really* thinks of him...

JACOBI
Hey, hey! What lies are you telling her, you lying liar?

MAXWELL
(back to full volume)
Like he said, he just wants to see if he can do it.

JACOBI
Yeah. That's better.

There' s a breezy air of professional friendship between the two. Despite herself, Lovelace is somewhat taken in by it.

Still working, Jacobi looks over his shoulder -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
And what about you, Captain?

LOVELACE
Kepler told me a... version of what they think happened to my shuttle. But I want to see what my file actually looks like for someone with top clearance.
(beat)
And... there's something else. There was... When I left the Hephaestus, I did it in a hurry. I didn't have time to - there were letters. I promised my crew to take them back with me and I didn't. I want to know if they made it.

Jacobi EXHALES.

JACOBI
Well, Captain... I can't help with the first part, but I think it's safe to say those letters got where they needed to go.

LOVELACE
They did?

JACOBI
Standard operating procedure for any clean up is to catalogue everything and make sure it gets to its proper destination.

MAXWELL
What Mr. Jacobi is trying to express, in his usual lack of style, is that SI5 is bound by rules. And just because sometimes we have to do awful things, it doesn't mean we have to like it.

LOVELACE
How considerate of you.

JACOBI
C'mon, Captain. We try to not be *total* monsters. When we can help it.

As Lovelace absorbs that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1430 HOURS

We rejoin Eiffel, Hilbert, and Kepler. In the background, some MEDICAL MACHINERY WHIRRS.

HILBERT
Interesting. Macrophage count very elevated, and granulocytes much more responsive to probing.

EIFFEL
(flat)
And there was much rejoicing.

KEPLER LAUGHS at Eiffel's joke. After a moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So what does that mean for my life expectancy?

But Hilbert is too engrossed in what he's doing.

HILBERT
Very interesting. I shall need to isolate... yes, yes... but... first step is undo trancepts inhibitor. Must find the...

EIFFEL
Hey, E.T., can you phone home for a sec? Am I gonna be able to get this thing off my arm anytime soon?

Hilbert doesn't answer. He is rifling through his equipment, trying to find something.

KEPLER
Doctor?
(beat)
Hilbert?

BEAT. Kepler lets out an EXASPERATED SIGH.

A moment later we hear the sound of a DRAWER BEING OPENED. Kepler grabs Hilbert's hand and thrusts it into the drawer - just in time for him to SLAM IT SHUT over it.

HILBERT
AHH!

EIFFEL
Whoa!

KEPLER
Doctor Hilbert, your patient had a question for you.

EIFFEL
Holy - ! It's okay, Colonel, I - I, uh - are you okay, Doc?

KEPLER
No. He's not. Not until I say he is.

HILBERT
(*barely* contained fury)
Colonel, I assure you: I meant no disrespect. Everything that I am doing is within acceptable parameters. But is *very*, very complicated process. I need some time to -

KEPLER
Failure to follow orders. Loss of company assets. Disclosure of highly classified company data. A nonperformance rate that would be hilarious if it didn't involve body counts in the plural. Even you, with your pathetic, "laughable to a second grader" standard, **have** to understand that "acceptable" is not the word you're looking for. **That is <u>not</u> how English works.**

EIFFEL
Guys? Maybe we all need to -

HILBERT
Eiffel, stay out of -

KEPLER
<u>Quiet</u>, Hilbert. What makes you think that you can tell him what to do? As far as I'm concerned, that man is your superior officer. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, this empty coffee cup outranks you. When in doubt, just assume that you are at the farthest point **past** the bottom of any food chain that you can possibly imagine.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Your days of giving orders to anyone on this station are over.

BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL
Uhh... Colonel? Permission to speak?
(beat)
Look, not that this... *thing* the two of you got going on isn't fascinating, but it's been a long day and I'm **still** connected to the Dracula-O-Matic over here. I just want to know how much medical insurance I need to buy this year.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Doctor? Your superior is waiting.

Hilbert takes a DEEP BREATH.

HILBERT
Initial readings suggest Decima has stabilized, Eiffel, yes. Is entering new adaptive cycle.

EIFFEL
Which means...?

HILBERT
Which means that we have arrived at a new stage. There is potential for exponential improvement on further trials.

KEPLER
Oh. Well, that's a damn shame.

Eiffel and Hilbert's heads turn towards Kepler.

EIFFEL
(where is this going...?)
Shame?

HILBERT
Why shame?

Kepler smiles at them, breathing the fresh air of a glorious morning.

KEPLER
Because I've been given authorization to pull the plug on this nonsense. You're done.

HILBERT
(small)
What?

KEPLER
We are halting all research related to the Decima Virus, indefinitely. Effective immediately you are -

HILBERT
(aaaand... **snap**)
What?! No! *This* -
(re: data)
This is **progress!** This is **results!** This is what I have spent *decades* trying to accomplish! My work -

KEPLER
Is over. That "progress?" Those "results?" That's your Personal Moron Tax for this disaster. The Decima Project is officially terminated. Finito.

HILBERT
You cannot do this! You do not have the authority to -

KEPLER
Yes, I **can.** And yes, I **do.**
(beat)
Doctor Maxwell will be handling the duties of chief science officer from now on. The only thing you're going to concern yourself with is keeping my crew alive and well, starting with this man. Take the virus out of his system, make it inert, treat the symptoms, I don't care. Just get it done.
(turns to Eiffel)
That sound good to you, Eiffel?

BEAT. Eiffel, for once in his life, doesn't know what to say.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Eiffel? We're not risking your health on this insanity any longer.

EIFFEL
I...
(clears his throat)
Colonel...

KEPLER
Unless... you **want** to continue *being experimented on*...?

EIFFEL
(slowly realizing his answer)
No. I **don't.** I've never wanted anything to do with it.

KEPLER
Well, that's settled, then. Do you understand your new orders, Dr. Hilbert?

At first Hilbert just opens and closes his mouth. Then -

HILBERT
(flatly)
I understand. Sir.

KEPLER
Say what you understand.

HILBERT
I understand I will confine myself to station medical duties, sir.

KEPLER
Excellent. Glad we had the chance to sort this out. Well.
(He laughs)
As you were, gentlemen.

With that, Kepler EXITS, SHUTTING THE DOOR behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. USS URANIA - SERVER ROOM - MEANWHILE

We hear the CRANK Of TOOLS AT WORK. But then -

BUZZER. No-go. Maxwell, Jacobi, and Lovelace all SIGH.

JACOBI
Whelp. That's the ballgame, folks.

MAXWELL
(shrug)
We got close, but without access to the tertiary encryption, I have no idea how to break through.

JACOBI
Ah well.
(exhales)
You want me to take your question to the Colonel, Captain? You never know, he might be willing to show you the records.

LOVELACE
Why would he bother?

We hear Maxwell and Jacobi open their mouths - and then close them.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Yeah, thought so.
(beat)
Besides, maybe the next time, we'll be -

JACOBI
Uh, whoa? Next - ? Captain, this - let's be clear for a moment. There is **no** next time.

LOVELACE
Yeah, yeah, I know. When we *don't* try this again, maybe we'll -

JACOBI
Captain, I'm being serious.

His tone is about as sober as we've heard so far. BEAT.

LOVELACE
What?

MAXWELL
You don't know Kepler the way we do. He's one of Goddard's top intelligence officers, and he can be very... enthusiastic when it comes to guarding his secrets.

JACOBI
Enthusiastic and *destructive*. In ways that alarm even me.

LOVELACE
But if - no, then what the hell was all of this?

JACOBI
This was a good opportunity. We had a reasonable idea of his schedule, some down-time, and...

MAXWELL
Someone that had already done a lot of hard work for us?

JACOBI
Yeah, that. But really, Captain... don't plan on making a habit out of this. Stars align again, *maybe*... but don't give him a reason to think that you're more trouble than it's worth. If you don't want to ask him, let it drop.

MAXWELL
You were very lucky that it was the two of us that found you.

JACOBI
He's trying to be what his mind thinks of as "civil." With most of you, anyway. Don't poke the bear.

LOVELACE
I assume this is your friendlier, cuddlier version of the whiskey speech?

MAXWELL
(to Jacobi)
Oh, God, he gave them the whiskey speech?

JACOBI
Oh yeah.
(imitating Kepler)
"I like the smell of it. I like the taste of it."

MAXWELL
"I like the feel of it in my hand."
(rolls her eyes)
Ugh.

In spite of herself, Lovelace does something she hasn't done in a while. She lets out a very soft - but genuine - LAUGH.

HERA
Captain? Would you mind heading back to the observatory? Lieutenant Minkowski has a question for you.

Lovelace exchanges a look with Jacobi and Maxwell.

JACOBI
Go. We'll clean up this mess.

LOVELACE
Sure. Tell Minkowski I'm on my way, Hera.

Lovelace EXITS.

BEAT. Finally -

JACOBI
Leak sealed up?

MAXWELL
Yeah, she won't be able to patch in this way.

JACOBI
How close was she?

MAXWELL
Too close. We were lucky we caught her. She's very good. It might turn into a problem.

Jacobi considers that.

JACOBI
I'll run it by Kepler.

MAXWELL
Good.
(beat)
Jacobi, just... out of curiosity: did we deliver those letters from the old Hephaestus crew?

Jacobi just gives her a look.

JACOBI
The hell you think we are? UPS?

And that question seemingly settled, we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1500 HOURS

Hilbert's wrapping things up, putting away equipment, shutting off monitors. Eiffel just sits there, in silence.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
You, uh, you okay, Doc?

HILBERT
Fine.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
So... Everything checks out? I'm not headed for another John Hurt chestburster episode?

HILBERT
I have no idea what that is, but you are doing well. Virus is much more stable now. You will be able to remain asymptomatic with little treatment.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Look, about what Kepler said -

HILBERT
There is nothing to discuss, Eiffel. You never wanted to be part of my research. Now you don't have to be.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
You're taking this, like, creepy well.

Hilbert takes a DEEP BREATH. He's never sounded more tired.

HILBERT
I am taking this the way I need to in order to survive. *You* need to do the same.

EIFFEL
What do you mean?

HILBERT
Use your brain. Kepler is manipulating you. He is using your feelings against me to gain leverage over you. This is only the beginning.

EIFFEL
Of me being treated like a human being?

HILBERT
Call it what you like. Eiffel, you have no reason to trust me, but please: do not make the mistake of trusting him.

EIFFEL
I know who my friends are. And who they aren't.

Hilbert LAUGHS a bitter laugh.

HILBERT
Then good luck to you... *sir*.

Eiffel gets up to leave, and OPENS THE DOOR.

EIFFEL
Hey, for what it's worth? Maybe this is for the best. All this time you've spent studying the Decima Virus... I don't know that anything good has ever come of it.

HILBERT
Tell that to the fingernails you are not supposed to have.

BEAT. Eiffel looks down and sure enough...

EIFFEL
I - I hadn't even-

HILBERT
Effects of repetitive cyrostasis not far off from frostbite. Once tissue destruction begins, all previous evidence suggests damage is irreparable. And yet...

A BEAT, as Eiffel takes that in.

EIFFEL
You're saying... you're saying it works?

HILBERT
It was starting to.
(beat)
Not that it matters now, right?

EIFFEL
(deeply unsettled)
...Right.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

END EPISODE 33.

WOLF 359

"A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: The following takes place on Day 944 and Day 945 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING

BEGIN EPISODE 34:

No opening credits yet. Instead, we go right into:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 1855 HOURS

Eiffel sits at the controls of the Urania, tinkering. With him are Kepler and Jacobi.

KEPLER
Officer Eiffel? Timeframe?

EIFFEL
Just one moment.

Another BEAT as he works. Then -

KEPLER
How much longer?

EIFFEL
Getting these files pulse beacon relayed isn't as simple as just sending a text, Colonel.

KEPLER
How much longer?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Maybe two minutes?

KEPLER
Good. That wasn't so bad, was it?

EIFFEL
Yeah... Seven straight hours scanning, encoding, and transmitting Dr. Maxwell's reports, which are either *in* binary or *about* binary, who can even tell anymore. Can't think of anything I'd rather be doing.

JACOBI
(mock sympathy voice)
Awww... did the poor little Communications Officer have to send out some reports?
(sternly)
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Quit complaining. You're still on the clock, aren't you?

EIFFEL
(checking his watch)
Yeah... for about another four minutes.

JACOBI
And you have all of tomorrow off, so why don't you just wrap this up? That way we can *all* clock out?

Eiffel works silently for BEAT. Then -

KEPLER
(snaps fingers)
Okay, I've got a good one.

Eiffel GROANS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
So there's this insurance salesman, right? And -

EIFFEL
Could - could we not? It's late, and tonight is... Could I just finish sending these transmissions? Please?

BEAT.

KEPLER
But there's still three minutes on the clock...

Eiffel GROANS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
So this salesman, he's driving around the country, going from town to town. One night, he ends up sleeping at this farm house. Next morning when he wakes up, he sees the farmer rounding up his sheep.

But then he notices something strange. The farmer isn't using a sheepdog - he's using a pig. And not just any pig, it's a pig like no other.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
He's fast, and strong, and he's zipping all over the pasture... despite the fact that he's only got three legs.

There's a DING! from the console.

EIFFEL
Oh, looks like the relay's gone through! I guess we can just -

KEPLER
(talking over him)
So the salesman goes up to the farmer, and he says, "Excuse me, but how come that pig's only got three legs?" And the farmer goes, "Let me tell you about that pig. That there is the greatest pig on Earth. He doesn't just herd my sheep, he also crows in the morning, milks the cows in the afternoon, and picks up the eggs from the henhouse in the evening."

EIFFEL
Wow, that's **awesome.** If I could just -

KEPLER
"But that's not all!"

Eiffel GROANS, settling back down.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
"'Cuz that pig can count! He counts better than I can. Heck, that pig does all of the accounting for the farm, and he fills out my tax forms every year."

EIFFEL
(very fast)
Does it really, what a great pig, what a super story, let me just -

But Jacobi grabs him by the shoulder, stopping him from going anywhere.

JACOBI
Settle down.

KEPLER
So by now even the salesman is saying, "Wow! *That's* an amazing pig!" But the farmer goes, "I ain't done! Three years ago, my house caught on fire. The pig called the firehouse, and he got water from the river to put out the flames. **And** he fought his way through the smoke, to where my wife and kids were laying unconscious, and he *dragged* them to safety."

EIFFEL
Is there *any* end in sight, or...

KEPLER
Wait for it. So now the salesman is *really* impressed. "Goddamn! That really is some pig! But I still don't understand why he's only got three legs." So the farmer looks at the salesman like he's the *stupidest* man in the entire world, and he says...
(beat)
And... and he says...
(beat)
Goddammit.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well, that was great. Let's do this again next year.

KEPLER
Hold on, I can get it.

EIFFEL
(sigh)
Yes, I'm sure you can, sir.
(more to himself)
Somebody rescue me from all this -

And that's when we hear something that we haven't heard in a while: the sound of the RADIO TUNING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... I didn't mean *you* guys.

KEPLER
Eiffel? Is this -

EIFFEL
Yeah, it might be. Hold on...

Eiffel tinkers with the controls, and after a moment it emerges: Camille Saint-Saëns's **Carnival of the Animals, VII. Aquarium.**

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Colonel Kepler... Dear Listeners FM, bringing you the very best of We Love the 1890's.
(to himself)
Unbelievable. Almost a year of radio silence, and they decide to start broadcasting again **tonight.**

KEPLER
Eiffel, get me a full analysis. Spectroscopic, radiographic - I want everything **and** the kitchen sink. Jacobi, get on the horn with the Hephaestus. I want Maxwell to -

And that's when the music collapses into STATIC.

EIFFEL
Dammit!

He furiously tinkers with the equipment. For a moment, the radio WARBLES and adjusts, but then it just goes back to STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We lost the signal.

KEPLER
Can you get it back?

EIFFEL
Maybe?

JACOBI
Sir?

BEAT. Then Kepler EXHALES.

KEPLER
Add twelve hours to the rotation, Jacobi. Get everyone on their feet. And then get a fresh pot of coffee started - this is going to be a *long* night.

And off of that, we go into our -

OPENING TITLES

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1930 HOURS

Hera (grumpy), Minkowski (grumpier), and Lovelace (grumpiest), are assembled around the Comms console. In the back of the room, Maxwell (non-grumpy) goes through some data on her ipad device.

LOVELACE
So... let me get this straight. About half an hour ago, the radio on the Urania picked up one of Eiffel's mysterious transmissions.

MINKOWSKI
Yep.

LOVELACE
But... then they lost it?

HERA
Yep.

LOVELACE
Aaand I can't go back to bed because... ?

MAXWELL
Secondary observational site. If Eiffel can zero in on the signal again, it'll be better to have two sets of sensors running instead of one. They're over there on the Urania comms panel, we're here on the Hepheastus's.

LOVELACE
But... just so we're *completely* clear: we **don't** have the signal now, do we?

Minkowski, who's closest to the Comms Panel, FLIPS A SWITCH. They get a BLAST OF STATIC. Minkowski FLIPS IT BACK.

MINKOWSKI
Nope.

LOVELACE
And is there anything that we can do to get the signal back?

HERA
Not really.

LOVELACE
THEN WHY THE HELL AM I STUCK HERE FOR THE NEXT ELEVEN AND A HALF HOURS?!

MAXWELL
We need to be in attendance.

LOVELACE
What does that even mean?

MINKOWSKI
It means we don't have to do *anything* in particular. We just need to be here.

LOVELACE
Great.

MAXWELL
Oh come on. Lighten up, this might be fun.

LOVELACE
How might it be fun?

MAXWELL
Before I came back here, I conducted a search of the storerooms for any recreational supplies.

LOVELACE
And how was that?

MAXWELL
... very disappointing. But... I did find **this.**

She holds up a box.

LOVELACE
What's that?

MAXWELL
This is Funzo.

LOVELACE
What the *hell* is Funzo?

MAXWELL
I have **no idea**, but... according to this sticker on the box, it's the... "Craziest Board Game of 1973." Yes? No? We could do worse.

HERA
Umm... I don't know if this is a good idea. Lieutenant, wasn't there something about this in the survival manual?

MINKOWSKI
Pryce and Carter 792: Of all the dangers that you will face in the void of space, nothing compares to the *existential terror* that is Funzo.

LOVELACE
Sold.

MAXWELL
Sold.

We hear as they POP OPEN the box. Lovelace grabs the instructions.

LOVELACE
(clears throat)
"Funzo is a competitive game for two teams of two or more players."

MAXWELL
I call Hera!

MINKOWSKI
(just a second behind her)
I call H - Dammit.

And as they begin to go through the other contents of the box, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 2100 HOURS

Eiffel is at the controls, trying to get the RADIO TUNING NOISE to turn into something useful and productive. Jacobi hangs over his shoulder. After a moment -

JACOBI
Have you tried wiggling that dial?

EIFFEL
Yes.

BEAT.

JACOBI
What about that one?

EIFFEL
Yes.

BEAT.

JACOBI
What if we got a coat hanger and -

EIFFEL
Jacobi!
(beat)
I am a very tired... very *grumpy* expert, but I **am** an expert in how these things work. So can we just assume that I'm doing everything I can to get this signal back?

JACOBI
You need to lighten up a bit. C'mon, we might actually be getting some alien contact. Tonight of all nights! It's a C-

EIFFEL
Don't say it!

JACOBI
Okay, I won't, but you need to have a little fun with this.

EIFFEL
This isn't fun!

At that moment a DOOR OPENS and Kepler rejoins them.

KEPLER
All non-essential systems are going dark now.
(chuckles)
This is kind of like a stakeout, isn't it? Fun!

Jacobi shoots Eiffel a look: *see?* Eiffel just makes a DISGUSTED NOISE.

EIFFEL
Why do I even try...
(to Kepler)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
How long before I get that extra shot of power to the receiver?

KEPLER
Functions are shutting down. Soon.

EIFFEL
How soon?

KEPLER
Ten minutes.

EIFFEL
You said that twenty minutes ago!

KEPLER
You doing okay, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Fine.

KEPLER
You sure? How's your blood sugar? Do you want a cookie?

EIFFEL
No I don't want a cookie! I want this frickin' signal to quit being a tease and show up to the prom!

BEAT. Kepler and Jacobi look at each other.

KEPLER
I'm going to get you a cookie.

As he exits -

EIFFEL
(sotto)
This is hell.

BEAT.

JACOBI
What about *that* dial?

EIFFEL
(sotto)
This is hell and I'm in it...

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2300 HOURS

Minkowski and Lovelace together, speaking in low, furtive whispers.

LOVELACE
This is a problem.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah...

LOVELACE
Whatever we do... it's a big risk.

MINKOWSKI
You think I don't know that?

LOVELACE
Either way, whatever happens...
I'll do my best to back you up.

Minkowski EXHALES SLOWLY. She's not happy about this but she is - slowly - coming to a decision.

MINKOWSKI
Okay...
(to Maxwell)
I'm gonna go with the wheel.

Maxwell, surrounded by the various components of Funzo, looks up at them and nods.

MAXWELL
You got it.

We hear a board game WHEEL SPIN. As it settles...

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Ooof, time vortex! You lose all income for the next two turns.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, wait, I've still got... A hidden inwardness card. That should be able to cancel the time vortex, right?

MAXWELL
No.

MINKOWSKI
No?

LOVELACE
This is ridiculous...

MAXWELL
Hidden inwardness is a blue card. You can only play those at the start of the turn.

MINKNOWSKI
No, no, it's a blue *sapphire* card. I thought you could play *those* at any time.

HERA
Normally yes, but we're still in the spy phase for another three turns, so sapphire cards can only be used for their secondary effect.

MINKOWSKI
Secondary effect?

MAXWELL
Yeah, so if I were you I would save that until we get to the next loyalty round.

LOVELACE
This game makes no sense!

HERA
Oh, you're just upset because you guys are behind.

MINKOWSKI
Uh, I'm kind of with Lovelace here. I'm not even... entirely sure what we're trying to do here.

HERA
Guys, it's *really* not that complicated. You spin the wheel of ages until you have enough power tokens to get a part of the sunken idol. After that, you just keep going up the Celestial Steps, avoid the secret surveillance network, and make it to Temple of Light with the three Crowns of Wisdom.

MAXWELL
Unless somebody plays a sabotage card.

HERA
(yeah, no duh)
Unless somebody plays a sabotage card.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Well... that certainly cleared everything up. Why are we playing this stupid game?

HERA
You got anything better to do?

MAXWELL
All right, Minkowski, are you going to play another card or do you want to pass your turn?

MINKOWSKI
Pass...

HERA
Great! My turn. Card please.

MAXWELL
(drawing for her)
Oh-kay, you got a...
(well this doesn't sound great)
Mass Wealth Redistribution card?
(reading)
Discard *all* of your team's power tokens?!

HERA
What?

MAXELL
And surrender all your loyalty cards to the other team? What the hell is this?

LOVELACE
Huh. You know, Minkowski, maybe I haven't been giving this stupid game enough of a chance...

HERA
Hang on, this doesn't make sense. There has to be some kind of -

LOVELACE
Oh, you're just upset because you guys are behind.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, come on. You want to sit around talking, or do you want to play some Funzo?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0200 HOURS

A very frustrated Eiffel sits around the radio receiver, listening as it tries to tune through static. Behind him are Kepler and Jacobi.

KEPLER
Eiffel?
(no response)
Eiffel? Any thoughts?

EIFFEL
I, uh... I really don't know.

KEPLER
(slow and pointed)
You don't know?

EIFFEL
Look, sir, this is actually a really complicated system. I need to focus if I'm going to -

KEPLER
(darkening)
I understand that perfectly, but... I **am** the commanding officer in this room, and I have asked you to do something for me. Correct?

EIFFEL
(gulp)
... Yes?

KEPLER
Well?

Eiffel looks around, equal parts intimidated and annoyed, thinking. Finally -

EIFFEL
Is... is it an animal?

KEPLER
Is it an animal?
(beat)
No. No, it is not an animal.
Eighteen. Jacobi?

JACOBI
Okay. Is it something that exists in the real world?

As they continue with 20 Questions, Eiffel slumps over the comms panel.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Yep, definitely in hell. At least the girls don't have it any better...

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0330 HOURS

Minkowski, Lovelace, Maxwell, and Hera - all still in the thick of Funzo. Except everyone's commitment to winning the game - and therefore, the intensity of play - has gone **way the hell up**.

MINKOWSKI
I want to go to the steps.

MAXWELL
How many tokens?

MINKOWSKI
Five.

HERA
Do you want to draw from the earth or lightning decks?

MINKOWSKI
Lightning.

LOVELACE
Lightning.

MINKOWSKI
(drawing card)
Tornado. Great.

We hear her making some adjustments to whatever board they have. Without even waiting for her to finish:

HERA
My turn. I -

LOVELACE
(laying down card)
Stop! Cultural appropriation! Lose a turn!

MAXWELL
(playing one of her own)
Revisionist history: suck it!
(at Hera)
Hera, chance card?

HERA
No, I'll take two at the wheel.

MINKOWSKI
How many tokens do you bid?

HERA
Six.

LOVELACE
Raise to nine.

MAXWELL
Fifteen.

MINKOWSKI
Sold. Spin and -

A TIMER GOES OFF.

MAXWELL
Blitzkrieg!

We hear some kind of MAD SCRAMBLE as all the able-bodied players lunge towards something.

LOVELACE
I got it.

MAXWELL
Nu-uh. My hand is on the timer.

LOVELACE
Ref?

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Ref?

We hear Hilbert CLEAR HIS THROAT. At some point earlier in the evening he got conscripted into this madness.

HILBERT
Hmm... Given the amount of... hand to timer surface area... I have to rule in favor of Captain Lovelace -

Lovelace victoriously CLAPS her hands.

LOVELACE
Hah! In your nerd face!

HILBERT
... unless, of course -
(flips through a page in the rulebook)
- she chooses to forfeit the blitzkrieg round by removing her hand from the timer *before* tokens are distributed.

LOVELACE
Oh goddammit!

MAXWELL
We'll take those, thank you very much.

As Maxwell gathers up tokens, Minkowski SMACKS Lovelace in the back of the head.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace! Get your head in the game!

HILBERT
(still flipping through the rulebook)
Which means that both teams are now tied with 247 power tokens each. In accordance to the rules, we are now ready for the Nuclear Winter Round.

HERA
Oh-ho-ho, you guys are going down now.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, please. We *invented* the Nuclear Winter Round... whatever that is.

MAXWELL
Oh yeah, you wanna bet?

LOVELACE
All right, little girl, what you thinking?

MAXWELL
How about... loser takes all the winner's late night surveillance rotations for a week?

LOVELACE
How about a month?

MAXWELL
How about **two** months?

Minkowski and Lovelace look at each other. Nod.

MINKOWSKI
Done.

LOVELACE
Done.

HERA
Great. Hilbert, what's this Nuclear Winter Round thing?

PAGE FLIP. PAGE FLIP. PAGE FLIP.

HILBERT
I am... not completely sure yet.
(page flip)
This game makes absolutely no sen-

EVERYONE
Yes, it does!

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0400 HOURS

Eiffel is still at the controls, still getting no joy. Jacobi looms behind him, leafing through a book. Kepler is by the door stretching.

KEPLER
I think I need another cup of coffee. Either one of you gentlemen want anything?

Both Eiffel and Jacobi MUTTER in the negative. We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as Kepler exits.

A moment later we hear Eiffel SLAM something on the radio array frustrated.

EIFFEL
All right, that's it! That's it...

JACOBI
(looking up from his book)
Everything all right, honey?

EIFFEL
No. I give up. I've tried every setting on this damn thing, backwards and forwards. Nothing's working. Kepler's probably going to throw me out the airlock.

JACOBI
Nah, I don't think so.

EIFFEL
How can you tell?

JACOBI
I know him.
(catches himself)
Well, I know him *better than you do*. I've worked with him longer. I know how he does business.

EIFFEL
Do you? Because I have no idea. Half the time I feel he's gonna pin a medal on me -

JACOBI
And the other half you feel he's about to shoot your brains out? Yeah, that's kind of the shtick. He's not *actually* longing for the chance to kill anyone.

EIFFEL
You weren't there when he was going off on Hilbert.

JACOBI
Well, that's different.

EIFFEL
Why?

JACOBI
Because he doesn't like Hilbert. There's history there.

EIFFEL
What do you mean?

Jacobi takes a DEEP BREATH. How do I want to explain this...? Finally:

JACOBI
First job I ever had with the SI-5. Me and then-Major Kepler were doing this... corporate break-and-enter sabotage thing. We've ended up in this sub-sub-basement-type-place when something goes **wrong**. Like, "somebody opened up all the cages in the zoo," **wrong**. This... prototype, explosive demolition device gets armed, and it's about to blow our faces off.

So Kepler turns to me and goes, "Mr. Jacobi, please take that thing apart, quick as you like." And I...
(chuckles)
I freeze. I'd never seen anything like that thing. I had no idea how to *begin* disarming it. So I tell him that we should do the *manly* thing and... you know, run for our lives.

You know what Kepler does? He goes to the door... and he locks us in. And he turns to me, and says, "Go take that bomb apart."

There's a LONG BEAT. The consoles HUM steadily.

EIFFEL
And then what happened?

JACOBI
Then I got to work. And I figured out how to take it apart. And we were fine.

He says that with equal parts admiration and contempt.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
He knows potential when he sees it. And he knows how to push.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(beat)
And I think he thought that Hilbert had it. And then he... didn't come through. He lost control of the situation. When something big came a-knocking, he didn't get the job done. And I don't think Colonel Kepler knows how to forgive that.
(beat)
But the rest of you? I think he's curious about how far you *can* go.

Eiffel considers this for a moment.

EIFFEL
I'm not an idiot, you know. I see what he's doing. Just because he's the enemy of Dr. Drago doesn't mean I'm gonna start thinking he's my friend. So if *that's* his evil ulterior motive, he can -

JACOBI
(small laugh)
Please, Eiffel. At any given moment, Colonel Kepler has about... eighteen ulterior motives. Half the time even *I* don't know why he's doing something.

EIFFEL
But you still trust him?

JACOBI
With my life.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
And if he tells you to blow us up?

JACOBI
I blow you up.

EIFFEL
Cool. Just checking...

Good talk? Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 0500 HOURS

Minkowski by herself, next to the Comms Panel. Lovelace approaches her.

LOVELACE
Hilbert says it'll just be another minute before they're ready for the nuclear winter round.

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

Lovelace spots something in Minkowski's hands.

LOVELACE
What have you got there?

MINKOWSKI
Just an old photo. I found this taped under Eiffel's comms panel.

LOVELACE
Huh.
(beat)
He looks so...

MINKOWSKI
Happy?

LOVELACE
Yeah. I don't think I've ever seen him like that.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. I didn't even know that Eiffel -

Across the room, Hilbert CLEARS HIS THROAT.

HILBERT
Lieutenant? Captain? We are ready to begin.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah!

LOVELACE
Let's do this!

And so they rejoin Maxwell and Hilbert and the picture is left behind, never to be spoken of again.

HILBERT
Nuclear winter round. All point values are tripled, all unplayed allegiance coins are now void, and the Ancient History restriction is no longer in effect. Ready?

EVERYONE
Ready!

HILBERT
Lovelace, first round is to you.

LOVELACE
I'm gonna use the silver ladder to go to the Golden Garden.

HILBERT
Do you take the scepter of courage with you?

LOVELACE
Yes.

Hilbert SHUFFLES a deck of cards. Holds them up to Lovelace.

HILBERT
Cut.

Lovelace cuts the deck, looks at the card at the bottom of the top pile, and -

LOVELACE
Oh!

HILBERT
Ah, Knight of Valor. No adventure bonus for Lovelace.

LOVELACE
(tight whisper)
I'm telling you, that knight is out to get us!

MAXWELL
I'm going to try the Wicked Carnival!

HILBERT
Do you have sixteen power tokens?

MAXWELL
Yes!

HILBERT
Did you purchase a ticket at the Devil's Crossroad?

MAXWELL
Yes!

HILBERT
Are you taking the Sword of Courage?

MAXWELL
Ye - wait, no! I mean no!

HILBERT
Ah, I have to go with your first answer. No one can enter the Wicked Carnival with any kind of weaponry. Play passes to Minkowski.

HERA
Maxwell!

MAXWELL
Sorry!

HILBERT
Minkowski? Do you want a chance card?

MINKOWSKI
Hit me.

Hilbert draws the top card from a deck. BEAT.

HILBERT
Ah.

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
Reality storm. Any team that plays the golden loyalty card in the next sixty second will win the game.

Everyone TWITCHES at this.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Starting... **now.**

He clicks on a TIMER. Everyone looks around them.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Uh... Hilbert?
(beat)
What happens if **none** of us have the golden loyalty card?

We hear as Hilbert FLIPS through the PAGES of the rulebook. After a moment.

HILBERT
Ah...

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
Very interesting...

EVERYONE
What?

HILBERT
Well, it appears that if nobody can play the golden loyalty card during a reality storm the game ends... and both teams forfeit.

EVERYONE
WHAT?!

HILBERT
That's what it says in the -

EVERYONE
SHUT UP.

LOVELACE
Oh for God's sake... seven hours and **no one has this stupid card?**

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can't you do something?

HERA
What am *I* supposed to do?

MINKOWSKI
I don't know! **Something**!

MAXWELL
No, no, there has to be something else we can do! There has to be a trick, or a loophole, or -

Aaaand... BEEP. Hilbert's timer goes off.

HILBERT
Game over.

There's a moment of thunderstruck silence. And then -

EVERYONE
Nooo!!!

And as they reel in horror, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0855 HOURS

Eiffel is doing a final check on the console. We get a BLAST OF STATIC from the radio. Jacobi and Kepler stand behind him.

EIFFEL
I don't know, sir. I've tried every trick in the book, and nothing's working.

He FLIPS a SWITCH, killing the static.

JACOBI
What do you think, sir? Time to call it?

Kepler considers for a BEAT. Then -

KEPLER
Jacobi? Could you give us the room for a moment?

Jacobi exits. Kepler goes up to Eiffel.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Okay - what's going on?

EIFFEL
What?

KEPLER
What's the problem?

EIFFEL
Umm, *this*? All of it? I've been awake for twenty-six hours straight, half of it because I've been sitting by the phone waiting for a call that never came.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
It's like my teenage love life played out on an intergalactic scale.

KEPLER
And that's it?

EIFFEL
Yes!
(beat)
No. I... I don't know. It's this... It's this place, it's this *night*. It's everything.
(beat)
It's... *them*. Whoever they are. Because every time they call, my life goes to *hell*. We pick up the phone and everyone starts trying to kill each other or people's brains get picked apart or there's explosions and people getting run through or I end up alone and -
(deep breath)
And... I can't do this. I can't just sit here, wondering if this - *this* - is the night another part of my life goes crazy.

BEAT.

KEPLER
I understand.

EIFFEL
(le skeptical)
You do?

KEPLER
Of course I do. What, you think when I was young I dreamt about this? About being stuck up here? Of course not. I had things I wanted to do, places I wanted to see, people I wanted to be with, and that's all... that's all gone. Because this job has asked *everything* of me. It has *demanded* that I give it every inch of my life. You think you know me? That you've met me? No. You've met the Artist Formerly Known as Warren Kepler. You've met my job. Aside from that, there's no one left for you to know. I'm **gone.**
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I've been goddamned canceled - show's over, there will be no encores. All that's left is... *this*. Sitting here, waiting for a phone call.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
But how do you live that way? How do you -

KEPLER
- not go crazy?
(he exhales)
Well, you take it one day at a time. And you learn how to laugh. You start to see the humor in everything. Even the bad parts. *Especially* the bad parts.

EIFFEL
Don't tell me to lighten up. I already got that line from Jacobi.

KEPLER
Yeah, Jacobi's a smart man.
(beat)
You know the great thing about jokes? It's a matter of perspective. Guy's going about his day, gets hit in the head with an anvil. You're standing next to him? Most horrible thing you'll ever see. You're a mile off?
(shrugs)
No idea it even happened, what do you care? But if you look at it just the right way...
(beat)
What do you think *your* perspective is, Officer Eiffel?

Eiffel considers this for a BEAT. And that moment, a TIMER goes off. Kepler switches it off.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
All right, that's twelve hours. I think we can call it a night.
(stretching)
Shut the equipment down, and then get yourself some rack time.

EIFFEL
Yeah.

Kepler begins to exit. He's at the door when... he CHUCKLES SOFTLY.

KEPLER
You know? I just remembered how that joke ended. So the salesman goes up to the farmer, and he goes, "If that pig's so wonderful, how come it's only got three legs?" And the farmer looks at him like he's just said the stupidest thing in the whole wide world. And he goes:

"Look: when you got a pig that good? You don't eat it in a single sitting."

Eiffel takes that in. Stares at Kepler for a moment. And then both men LAUGH SOFTLY.

As Eiffel turns back towards the equipment and Kepler exits, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1000

An exhausted Minkowski and Lovelace are still in the comms room. A DOOR OPENS. Eiffel enters, takes in the scene.

EIFFEL
... what the hell happened here?

MINKOWSKI
Don't ask.

LOVELACE
Don't ask.

EIFFEL
What did you guys do all -

MINKOWSKI
Don't ask.

LOVELACE
Don't ask.

Eiffel finds a box floating in front of him. He holds it up to them.

EIFFEL
Funzo? What the hell is -

MINKOWSKI
Don't. Ask.

LOVELACE
Don't. Ask.

EIFFEL
Oookay...

HERA
How was your night, Officer Eiffel?

LOVELACE
Yeah, you ever manage to get that signal back?

EIFFEL
Nah. Twelve hours babysitting a radio receiver and all I've got to show for it is a bad migraine and a powerful urge to sleep through my first day off since dinosaurs roamed the Earth.

MINKOWSKI
Well... just make sure we get to see **some** of you today, all right?

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll make it out for presents and... whatever we're doing for our attempted-murder-versary.

MINKOWSKI
That's not what I meant.

EIFFEL
Hmm?
(gets it)
Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah.
(pats him on the shoulder)
Happy birthday, Eiffel.

HERA
Happy Birthday, Officer Eiffel.

LOVELACE
And Happy Kwanzaa!

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace...

LOVELACE
Happy Birthday, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Thanks.
(soft chuckle)
Thank you, guys.

HERA
So? It's your birthday. What are you going to do today?

EIFFEL
Aside from making up for all the sleep I *didn't* get last night?

He pauses for a moment, considering. Finally -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
The same thing I do every night, Pinky: I'm gonna get older.
(beat)
I'm gonna get older.

And on that note, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 34.

WOLF 359

"NEED TO KNOW"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: The following takes place on Day 959 and Day 960 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING

BEGIN EPISODE 35:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ASTRONOMY DECK - 2000 HOURS

Minkowski is SOFTLY MUTTERING to herself as she works on a computer terminal. She YAWNS. We hear her DRINK some coffee through a straw. After a few moments of her typing...

MINKOWSKI
Aaand... done.

She lets out a tired, "phew," as she begins to shut down the terminal. A moment later, the DOOR behind her OPENS.

EIFFEL
(entering)
Ah! There you are, Commander. I need -

MINKOWSKI
Nope.

EIFFEL
Nope?

MINKOWSKI
Nope. Whatever it is, don't care.
(beat)
Wait a minute: are we blowing up?

EIFFEL
Uh... not that I know.

MINKOWSKI
Great. In *that* case? I don't care.

She turns and goes out. We follow into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel trails after Minkowski.

EIFFEL
Uh, Commander -

MINKOWSKI
Look, Eiffel, I just spent *all day* reconfiguring the star data we have on the Doradus system. It took eleven hours, but it's done.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
So, unless you've got something that might actually kill us, me and my coffee cup are gonna go lie down.

EIFFEL
Umm, did you not see the new work assignments?

Minkowski stops dead in her track. *Excuse me?*

MINKOWSKI
What new work assignment?

EIFFEL
(nervous chuckle)
Oh, uh... Colonel Kepler kinda... moved a whole bunch of stuff. Like that shift you just did, it kinda got moved to... uh, now. That's -

CRUNCH. Minkowski's hand just became a fist. There was a coffee cup in the way. Now there isn't.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- whoa! I mean, uh, I... I never liked that cup anyway.

MINKOWSKI
(gritted teeth)
And why am I just hearing about this?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
You know, certain questions, they, uh... well they only lead to *pain*.

Minkowski spins around, and goes through a door.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, hey! Wait up, Commander!

As Eiffel goes after her, we -

CUT:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 15 MINUTES LATER

Kepler at the bridge. A DOOR OPENS, and Minkowski storms in, followed meekly by Eiffel.

KEPLER
Ah, Minkowski, there you -

MINKOWSKI
Colonel, I've got a complaint.

KEPLER
Oh? Well it's a good thing I'm the head of the Complaints Department! Oh wait, no. I'm actually the head of the I Don't Give a Rat's Ass, Shut Up And Do Your Job Department.

MINKOWSKI
I never got the job reassignments.

KEPLER
(as if searching for something)
Oh... oh... Nope, my position regarding your shutting up and doing your job still stands. What do you want, a written apology?

MINKOWSKI
I want to be kept in the loop.

KEPLER
Well, that's very nice for you.

MINKOWSKI
Data sets? Test results? Weather reports? Why doesn't *any* of that go through me anymore?

KEPLER
And what do you want me to -
(catches up to what she said)
Weather? Weather reports?
(beat)
Look out a damn window, Lieutenant!

MINKOWSKI
You know what I -

KEPLER
Today's forecast is... *space*. With a chance of... *some more space* in the afternoon!

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
You done?

KEPLER
Yes, and so are you. This nonsense is over. It's a classified deep space mission, Minkowski! Of course things are need-to-know! You don't hear anyone else -

Another DOOR OPENS. In come Lovelace, Maxwell, and -

JACOBI
Colonel Kepler! We've got a complaint.

LOVELACE
Umm... I found your people, Colonel.

KEPLER
(sotto)
Oh, outstanding timing as usual, Jacobi. Well done.

MAXWELL
What do mean we don't have access to the radiographic reading from the deep space signals?

KEPLER
I find that statement to be *extraordinarily* self-explanatory, Doctor Maxwell.

MAXWELL
Very funny.

JACOBI
Look, you want us to build this probe launcher? See if we can put more receivers in orbit?

KEPLER
Hence the orders I gave you to -

MAXWELL
What the hell do you expect us to do if we can't see what we're trying to hit? Are we supposed to just build you a probe that can pick up *all* conceivable signals?

KEPLER
Yes.

MAXWELL
(low)
Are you kidding?

KEPLER
No.

MAXWELL
(louder)
Are you kidding?

KEPLER
No.

MAXWELL
(**loud**)
Are you kidding?!

KEPLER
No.

JACOBI
How the hell do you expect us to do that?!

KEPLER
Well.

JACOBI
Colonel!

MAXWELL
Colonel!

KEPLER
Quiet.

The word isn't loud – it's more growl than shout – but the effect is instant: everyone shuts the hell up.

BEAT.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Don't forget where you are. I don't know what whiners' solstice we're in the middle of, but it's officially *over*. You will get whatever information I find it within my extraordinarily generous heart to share with you.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And the only thing you will say to that before you go quietly accomplish your tasks will be, "Yes, sir, thank you, sir." Anything other than that will result in a death so *graphic* that descriptions of it will be outlawed in all but the most Third World of countries. Are we clear?
(beat)
I asked a question! **Are we CLEAR?**

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Good. Now... if we could please get to the actual task at hand? If there's no other objections?
(beat: there aren't)
Fantastic. For tonight's performance: we are going to be synching all of the astromechanical data from the Hephaestus archives to my personal server on the Urania. Doesn't that sound like fun?

Various half-hearted MOANS and GROANS from the floor.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I said **doesn't that sound like fun?!**

Slightly more hearted MOANS and GROANS from the floor.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
That's better. Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(knee-jerk)
I didn't do it! I mean, yes sir?

KEPLER
You're with me.

EIFFEL
(Is that a good thing?)
I am?

KEPLER
You're the only one who hasn't wasted my time with pointless *whining* tonight, so you're going to help me on the data collection end.
(to the others)
The rest of you are going to stay here and make sure the data gets processed and archived correctly. Shouldn't be too bad just about...
(consults clipboard)
... oh, about eight hours' worth. But, hey, given the amount of fun y'all are gonna have doing it, I think the time's gonna just *fly* by.
(beat)
Stand by for the first files.

A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES as Kepler exits, taking Eiffel in his wake. As soon as he's out of the room various noises of EXASPERATION and EXHAUSTION are heard. After that -

LOVELACE
Umm... I don't think that *I* did any complaining either...

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 2 HOURS LATER

Later. Minkowski, Lovelace, Jacobi, and Maxwell, each huddled at a different console. These are four unhappy, sullen souls right now. After a couple moments of disgruntled TYPING...

JACOBI
(how flat can you get)
Anybody got the AWKS010 tech readout?

After a moment of PAPER RUSTLING -

MINKOWSKI
(I see your flat, and I raise you **flat**)
Yeah, hold on.

She grabs a piece of paper and hands it to Jacobi.

JACOBI
Thanks.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Hera, are we almost done with this?

HERA
Uh... **no**. At your current input rate, you still have approximately... six hours of work ahead of you.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
How about now?

We hear assorted GROANS. Minkowski YAWNS.

HERA
You know, the more you focus on your work, the sooner you'll get to your down time.

MINKOWSKI
Not likely. I'm sure the Colonel has some other tedious piece of minutiae waiting in the wings.

HERA
(definitely)
Yeah. Probably.

MINKOWSKI
Are you *enjoying* this, Hera?

HERA
(the very soul of innocence)
Who, *me*? I would never -

But something weird happens on that "never." Hera glitches badly. And not in the way she normally does - rather than repeating, her voice goes WAY UP and then WAY DOWN before CUTTING OUT in a BURST OF DISTORTION.

MINKOWSKI
(oh no...)
Hera?

BEAT. And then, with another BURST OF DISTORTION:

HERA
- never never never never do anything like thAAAH, what the hell was that?

JACOBI
Maxwell?

MAXWELL
(already at a computer)
Yeah, I'm on it.
(type, type, typedy-type)
Yeeech... looks like you're getting a bit of electroneural bleed from the server files. Sorry about that.

JACOBI
Why is it doing that?

MAXWELL
Umm, maybe because these drivers are old as hell? It's like asking a 1970's fax machine to play a Youtube video - the fact that we're interfacing with Kepler's server at all is a minor miracle.

HERA
Am I going to be - ?

MAXWELL
You should be okay. It might feel weird for a couple of minutes, but after that your system should *huh* that's interesting.
(type, type)
Looks like we might have something coming through.

LOVELACE
Coming through?

MAXWELL
Yeah... a new file's getting added to Hera's directory.

There's a DING! - one we've never heard before - from the console. Maxwell PRESSES A KEY, and we get the sound of TEXT FILLING UP THE SCREEN.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Let's see...
(reading off screen)
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
"Memorandum on Emergency Contingent Scenario, Designation Theta. The following is a list of astronomical, technological, and informational parameters that should be used to ascertain the possibility of contact with..."
What the hell?

By now everyone's gathered around Maxwell's console.

JACOBI
Hang on, move over.
(beat)
It's from Hilbert's personnel briefing file. From the start of the mission.

LOVELACE
That's on Kepler's server? Why would that be on there?

MAXWELL
(shrug)
Everything's on there. Kepler has Black Archive clearance. If it's in any way related to this mission, it'll be there.

That's when there's another DING! From the console. Everyone's eyes dart nervously from person to person.

BEAT.

Finally, Jacobi CLEARS HIS THROAT.

JACOBI
Hold on, hold on. Looking at these files - at *any* of these files - would be an **enormous** breach of protocol, not to mention a huge violation of Colonel Kepler's trust.

MINKOWSKI
(mutter)
Right...

LOVELACE
(mutter)
Yeah, I guess...

There's a few other reluctant murmurs of assent.

BEAT.

JACOBI
So that's why we need to be **real** quiet about this, all right?

MINKOWSKI
(enthusiastic)
Right, I think that's a good idea.

LOVELACE
(enthusiastic)
Oh, *absolutely*. We'll be super discreet.

There's a few other enthusiastic murmurs of agreement.

JACOBI
Cool. Maxwell?

Maxwell HITS THE KEY. We hear the SCREEN FILLING WITH TEXT again.

MAXWELL
All right, let's see...
(reading)
"Hephaestus Commander Personnel Report, Day 291. Office Eiffel continues to find new and creative ways to endanger our lives and test the limits of my sanity. The only thing more aggressively prevalent than his ineptitude might be his body odor."

MINKOWSKI
Whoa! Why is that on there?! Those reports are supposed to be -

JACOBI
Classified? Yeah, Lieutenant, *this* is where classified things end up.

LOVELACE
(reading over Maxwell's shoulder)
"He regularly exhibits an absolute lack of discernible skills, not to mention command over the English language or basic motor control." Wow, did this *really* need to be this harsh?

MINKOWSKI
(don't you *dare* judge me)
I don't have to answer that.

Fortunately for Minkowski, at that moment the console DINGS! Maxwell HITS the KEY, and a moment later we get a new text.

JACOBI
What is this?

LOVELACE
Looks like... some kind of readout on the Hephaestus thermal system.

HERA
(sooo casual)
Yeah, it's pretty boring. So why don't we just -

MAXWELL
Wait - Hera, why were you siphoning power out of the heating system?

MINKOWSKI
<u>What</u>?

HERA
(frustrated whispers)
Maxwell...

LOVELACE
Hera? Is that why...?

HERA
Okay, fine, *yes*, for a while I was... *slightly* diverting some of the thermal system's power to the digital maintenance array. You'll be grateful in six years when the O.R. interface is still running!

DING! New file's incoming...

LOVELACE
Oh, you hear that, Minkowski? We nearly got frostbite that one time, but at least the digital chess *is working fine*!

JACOBI
AHEM
(once he has everyone's attention:)
"Captain Lovelace has made a full recovery, but her growing dependence on painkillers is getting more alarming by the day."

MINKOWSKI
The hell?

MAXWELL
Medical journal of Dr. Elias Selberg.

MINKOWSKI
You were getting high?

LOVELACE
(slow, through gritted teeth)
I got a broken an arm trying to save one of my crew members. It was a *very* difficult time.

DING! New file starts showing up on the screen.

MAXWELL
(mildly horrified)
You were in command...

LOVELACE
YOU WEREN'T THERE!

But that train of thought is interrupted by Jacobi CHORTLING.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What?

JACOBI
"Dear Renée, thank you for your interest in the Tisch Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program..."

MINKOWSKI
Oh, come on!

JACOBI
(pressing on)
"We are sorry to say, we will not be able to offer you a spot in this year's blah blah blah." Oh this is too good. You wanted to write *showtunes*?

MINKOWSKI
Number one? Shut up. Number two, why are my personal records on there?!

HERA
I'm starting to think that **everything** is on there...

MINKOWSKI
How is it in any way relevant?!

DING! New file starts coming in, although only Maxwell's paying attention to it.

JACOBI
Oh, I think it's **very** relevant. I mean, if you're sending someone to pilot ships in deep space, you want to make sure that they can, you know... paint with all the colors of the wind.

Jacobi CRACKS UP - and, although to a lesser degree, so does Lovelace. Minkowski looks at her: *really*?

LOVELACE
Sorry, Minkowski. It's... it's *a little* funny.

MINKOWKSI
No, it isn't!

MAXWELL
No, but this is **hilarious.**
(clears her throat)
"Daniel Jacobi is, once again, receiving our unconditional recommendation for active service. From a psychiatric standpoint, he remains in outstanding health -"

JACOBI
Yeah! See, that's what -

MAXWELL
"- except, of course, for his inexplicable, nearly pathological fear of ducks."

There is a BEAT of stunned silence.

HERA
You're afraid of ducks?

JACOBI
(voice cracking)
No I'm n-
(clears throat, then, tightly:)
No, I'm... of course, I'm not.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Quack.

JACOBI
Stop that.

LOVELACE
(louder)
Quack!

JACOBI
I said stop it!

Everyone not named "Daniel Jacobi" BURST INTO LAUGHTER.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
It's not funny!

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, umm, not to go against you, Jacobi, but...

MAXWELL
It's the funniest thing I've ever heard.

PING!

JACOBI
Oh look! New file's coming through. Oooh, some court documents for Alana Maxwell! Looks like we've got a -
(beat)
You have a restraining order **on your family**?

LOVELACE
What?!

MINKOWSKI
What?!

Maxwell lets out an ANNOYED SIGH.

JACOBI
I assume there's some kind of story?

MAXWELL
I don't like them?

MINKOWSKI
They're your **family...**

MAXWELL
Have we not moved past the petty things? Like judgment?

DING! New file starts to come through...

HERA
Oh come on. Leave her alone. Plenty of people have very difficult relationships with their family, and it's not like -

JACOBI
Uh... Hera? I'm getting a memory file here, something involving Minkowski's quarters and -

HERA
(*super* outraged)
They're your *family,* Doctor Maxwell! How could you?!

MINKOWSKI
Hold it. What was that about my quarters?

BEAT. Hera takes her equivalent of a deep breath.

HERA
Officer Eiffel once... *persuaded* me to participate in a bet about... um...
(very fast)
... how long it would take you to find a certain item he'd hidden in your quarters.

MINKOWSKI
What. Item?

HERA
A, uh... a randomized buzzer.

MINKOWSKI
That was the two of you?! **I couldn't sleep for a week!**

MAXWELL
Umm...

JACOBI
Oh, go write a song about how hard your life is.

MINKOWSKI
Bite me.

MAXWELL
Guys...

LOVELACE
(off of a new file)
Jacobi once lost $13,000 on an Internet scam! In case anyone cares!

JACOBI
It seemed legit at the time!

LOVELACE
Oh yeah? What did you think you were buying? *Duck* repellant?

JACOBI
Shut up, pill popper!

LOVELACE
QUACK!

MAXWELL
HEY!

JACOBI
WHAT?!

LOVELACE
WHAT?!

There's a BEAT as everyone hyperventilates for a moment, realizing how crazy things got there for a moment.

MAXWELL
Okay, let's all just... take a deep breath here.
(beat)
Look... I don't know what we thought we would find in these files, but all we're getting out of this is *really angry*.

MINKOWSKI
(quickly sobering)
She's... she's right. All we're getting is information that *nobody* needs to know, and a couple of steps closer to murdering each other. So let's just... stop, all right?

BEAT.

JACOBI
All right, fine.

LOVELACE
Sure.

HERA
Probably for the best.

MINKOWSKI
Great. Thank you. And thank *you*, Doctor Maxwell.

MAXWELL
Sure. Sure.

MINKOWSKI
Now, come on. We've still got a lot of work to do.

They return to their respective stations. For a LONG BEAT they all work silently.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

Finally - Minkowski CLEARS her throat. Everyone's attention shifts to her.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Does anyone have the readout for WYL115?

PAPERS RUSTLE. After a moment -

LOVELACE
Yeah, I got it. I'll -

DING! goes the console. Everyone's eyes dart back and forth... Everyone gonna be cool?

BEAT.

BEAT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(guess everyone is going to be cool)
I'll get that for you.

Lovelace grabs the page, and hands it over to Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Captain.

LOVELACE
You're welcome. Is there anything else that -

Hera CHORTLES.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
(sooo guilty)
... yes?

LOVELACE
What are you laughing at?

BEAT.

HERA
Nothing.
(beat)
Just, uh... remembering something funny that Eiffel once said.

MINKOWSKI
And what was that?

HERA
It was... uh... it was...
(fuck it)
Do you have any idea how hard it is for me **not** to read a file? *It's right there*!

MINKOWSKI
Dammit, Hera...

HERA
In my defense, you're going to find this one *really* funny.

MINKOWSKI
You know, just because *you* read it doesn't mean that the rest of us are going to -

LOVELACE
(already pulling up the file)
Yeah, it absolutely does.
(clears throat)
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
"Peer review, written by one... Alana Maxwell!" Let's see... "Mr. Jacobi is nothing less than a consummate professional. His technical expertise and tireless dedication make him an ideal work partner in every way... and a credit to the SI-5."

Everyone takes that in. Jacobi is silently moved.

MINKOWSKI
Wow. High praise.

HERA
Yeah. Keep reading.

LOVELACE
"**However...** I must request that I am under no circumstances *ever* forced to share living quarters with Mr. Jacobi again. His off-hours practices result in an environment that can only be described as a *hostile assault on the senses."*

Everyone turns towards Maxwell.

JACOBI
Excuse me?

MAXWELL
I'm sorry.

JACOBI
A hostile assault on the senses?!

MAXWELL
You snore!

JACOBI
You can get earplugs!

MAXWELL
And you... other things.

JACOBI
Maxwell, I am only going to ask this once.
(breath)
Is this... about the cheeses?
(no answer)
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Goddammit, you said you didn't mind the cheeses!

MAXWWELL
How could **anyone** not mind the cheeses?!

DING! New file pops up.

MINKOWSKI
There were cheeses?

JACOBI
(at Minkowski)
Stay out of it, Broadway Baby!
(at Maxwell)
Maxwell, I can't even look at you right now...

MAXWELL
Daniel...

LOVELACE
(looking at the file)
Whoa...

MINKOWSKI
What?

LOVELACE
You once put an airborne sedative in the air vents that go to Eiffel and Hilbert's quarters?

MINKOWSKI
(fuck yes)
Oh, you bet I did.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Uh... Minkowski? Maybe you didn't hear what she just -

MINKOWSKI
No, I heard her. Look, I know that's something that I'd be ashamed of in a past life, but I am **so** not. That was the best. Week. Ever.

HERA
It *was* a pretty great week...

DING! Jacobi leans into the console.

JACOBI
Let's see... we've got an expense report... looks like two years ago Colonel Kepler spent $8,000 to go skiing.

MAXWELL
Skiing?!

BEAT. Maxwell CLEARS HER THROAT.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Oookay. It's... possible I might be losing perspective on what's scandalous and what isn't.

DING!

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Oh, but look! It's... some kind of operational bug report on -

HERA
Whoa! Uh, we don't need to see that. In fact -

THE MONITOR SHUTS DOWN.

HERA (CONT'D)
We just lost power.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... what's on that file?

HERA
(too fast)
Nothing. There is nothing on that file, and I have a right to some privacy, and also we just lost power to that screen, so let's all just drop it. Okay? How about that work? Maybe we should get back to -

But Maxwell's starting typing -

MAXWELL
O.S. override BX-32...

HERA
Oh, that's not fair!

MAXWELL
And...

The SCREEN TURNS BACK ON.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Let's see... internal operational bug report on...

HERA
Okay, so... this is going to sound... *kinda* bad on paper, but -

MAXWELL
Holy crap.

LOVELACE
What?

HERA
- the important thing is -

MAXWELL
You were trying to override your Bentham Directory?!

MINKOWSKI
What does the -

HERA
- **the important thing** is not to blow this out of -

MAXWELL
It's the part of her programming that stops her from consciously harming her crew members.

LOVELACE
What?!

HERA
- *proportion*.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, what the hell?

HERA
I didn't do anything!

MINKOWSKI
You tried to kill us!

HERA
No, no, no - see, this is what I was talking about! I didn't try to kill you! I... tried to see *if I could*... kill you.
(beat)
For science!

MINKOWSKI
Hera!

HERA
Which, by the way, still puts my kill count - attempted or otherwise - far below *a lot* of the people in this room.

JACOBI
Boo-hoo, I killed a plant, at least I didn't drug my fellow crew members just because I -

LOVELACE
Oh get off your high horse. I bet if we wait long enough we'll get a file about your blowing up a hospital or something!

JACOBI
Maxwell, I told you that in the strictest of confidences!

MAXWELL
I didn't tell them, you cheese-mongering idiot!

JACOBI
(runaway train of aggression)
Yeah, I just realized that a second ago and now I'm embarrassed and I'm sorry that I yelled at you, you insensitive android!

MINKOWSKI
(and...snap!)
OKAY, **ENOUGH!**
(beat)
<u>Enough</u>. We've heard enough. Each of us, in our own ways, are in equally deep holes here.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
So we have two choices: we can keep yelling at each other and marveling at how really, impressively awful we **all** are. *Or*, we can let this drop, and never speak of it, <u>ever again</u>. All those for option one?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
And all those for option two?

MURMURS OF ASSENT from everyone in the room.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Great. So let's file whatever the hell this was away... and get back to filing. Okay?

There's a BEAT where everyone goes back to their corners, shuffling papers, beginning to get back to work.

Then, a DING! Oh, no. It's another one.

BEAT.

BEAT.

Lovelace COUGHS. Papers SHUFFLE. Maxwell TYPES SOME STUFF.

But finally -

JACOBI
Uh, I hate to say it? But I need to look at that screen in order to process the readout for DWN100.

MINKOWSKI
(I said drop it)
No, you don't.

HERA
He kind of does. We need to at least get rid of whatever it is.

MINKOWSKI
Ugghhh... okay, fine. Just do it quick.

JACOBI
Okay. Quick. Got it.

CLICK, CLICK. He accesses the screen.

BEAT. This is not going quick. Then -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Holy...

There's a multitude of ANGRY GROANS from the floor.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi!

HERA
Seriously, Mr. Jacobi, if *I'm* not reading it, then you need to -

JACOBI
No, this is...

MINKOWSKI
(snap)
What? What is it now? What else is on there? Hilbert's tax returns? My third grade report card? <u>What</u>?

BEAT.

JACOBI
You may want to take a look at this one, Lieutenant.

Minkowski looks at him, puzzled. But after a moment, she approaches the terminal.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
(low)
What?

LOVELACE
Minkowski?

MAXWELL
What is it?

MINKOWSKI
It's a.. It's...

Everyone looks to the Commander, waiting to see what it is. But at that moment the DOOR OPENS, and in comes -

EIFFEL
Yo! Something wrong with y'all's comms?

Everyone freezes. Minkowski discretely taps a key to close the file.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We've been trying to call you for the last twenty minutes. Kepler says there's some kind of problem with the uplink data server thing. He wants us to reset the connection and then start again from the last processed file.

BEAT. He looks around, takes in everyone's lack of springing into action, as well as their very weird faces.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uhh, you guys okay? You kinda have a... Luke at the end of Empire sorta look going on.

BEAT. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
We're -
(swallows)
We're okay, Eiffel. We're fine. Just tired.

EIFFEL
Cool.
(pointing)
So, server? Work?

Minkowski looks around the room. Everyone is still reeling from the abortive emotion of what started to happen.

MINKOWSKI
Sure. Sure...

And as Eiffel begins TYPING and everyone gets back to work -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS BRIDGE - 0500 HOURS

Later. Everyone has - finally - finished processing all the files. We hear various sounds of PAPERS RUSTLING and TYPING, as well as a couple of SIGHS and YAWNS.

JACOBI
(stretching)
All right, well... nine hours later, we are **finally** done.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
What a blast, let's do that again sometime never.

MINKOWSKI
(so done)
Yeah. Good night.

She OPENS A DOOR, exiting into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She's almost through the hallway when -

EIFFEL
Commander?

Minkowski GROANS with exhaustion. But after a moment she turns around.

MINKOWSKI
What is it, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
I, uh... I wanted to apologize.

MINKOWSKI
I - what? For what?

EIFFEL
Look, I was thinking of what you were saying earlier, about not being in the loop anymore. Part of that's thanks to the Dick Dastardly Administration, but... yeah, part of that's on me. I'm the communications officer on this station, I should be making sure that everyone's properly communicated to. So I'm gonna try my best to make sure that you *actually* get everything you need to know. Cool?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel's that... Sure. Thank you.

There's a HEAVY BEAT between them. Eiffel starts to go and -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel? I... Never mind.

EIFFEL
Commander? Something else on your mind?

MINKOWSKI
(exhale)
I... No, it's... it's nothing. Forget about it.

EIFFEL
Sure.
(nods)
All right, get outta here. You just pulled two back-to-back shifts. Get some rack time.

MINKOWSKI
Right.
(beat)
Good night, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Good night, Commander.

And Eiffel goes back into the Comms Room. Minkowski SIGHS wearily. She's just about to be on her way when -

JACOBI
(emerging from around a corner)
"Gee, Commander, anything else on your mind? Anything at all? Saaaay... anything you recently read in a classified file?"
(beat)
You couldn't do it, huh? Couldn't tell him you knew?

MINKOWSKI
I don't know *anything*, Jacobi, and neither do -

JACOBI
"The court finds the defendant, Douglas Fernand Eiffel, guilty on one count of kidnapping and three counts of *child endangerment*. He is hereby sentenced to twenty-six years in -"

MINKOWSKI
Shut up. We have no idea what this is about.

JACOBI
Don't we? Because I think it's about how you've been working with a *convicted criminal* for over two years.
(beat)
You didn't know?

MINKOWSKI
Of course not.

JACOBI
Mmm. Child kidnapping. I wasn't expecting *that*. No wonder that -

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, stop it.

JACOBI
- no wonder that he was sent up here to be Hilbert's lab rat.

Minkowski's demeanor darkens.

MINKOWSKI
Look... You want to come after Hera, Lovelace, or me? Fair enough. We were there, we can hold our own. But what the two of us read about Eiffel? That's - that's nobody's business.

JACOBI
Of course it's not.

Minkowski just looks at him for a moment.

MINKOWSKI
Then... Then why the hell do you care?!

JACOBI
I don't. Long as he gets his job done, I don't care *at all*. Like you said: everyone's got some skeletons in the closet.
(beat)
But what about you, Lieutenant? Are you going to care?

Without waiting for an answer, he starts rounding a corner -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Good night!

And as Minkowski is left alone with her thoughts, we -

FADE OUT.

END OF RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 35.

WOLF 359

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

by

Emma Sherr-Ziarko

START EPISODE 36

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 0630 HOURS

We hear a familiar sound: the BURST OF STATIC of an Audio Log Recording beginning.

MAXWELL
This is the audio log of Doctor Alana Maxwell, on board the U.S.S. Hephaestus station. I'm on day four of electrical grid detail... Still trying to find the source of the power surges that have been affecting Hera's functionality. Of course, with these outdated electrical diagrams it's coming down to a bit of trial and error.
(yawning)
Emphasis on the error... Today's candidate for repair is...
(checking her notes)
... standard laboratory seven. Which should be somewhere around... ah-ha. Let's see what we've-

She HITS A SWITCH and a HATCH SWINGS OPEN. We follow her through it into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - STANDARD LAB SEVEN - CONTINUOUS

- a room that looks like a hurricane tore through it. A **messy** hurricane.

MAXWELL
... got. Oh boy.
(clears her throat)
Well, I'm not sure if I've found *the* problem, but I've found *a* problem. When is the last time anyone was even in here?

She lets out an exasperated SIGH as she SHUTS the HATCH, and pulls herself up to the room's ELECTRICAL PANEL.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
All right, let's see what's going on with these wires...

We hear the ROAR of a POWER DRILL. It goes off once, twice, three times, and then -

CLANK. The panel casing comes apart. Instantly she lets out another LOW EXALE: oh boy.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
God, it is *way* too early in the morning for this.

She CLICKS the INTERCOM SWITCH on the wall.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Jacobi? Could I get another cup of coffee down in Standard Lab Seven?
(beat)
Jacobi?

She hits the switch a few more times. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. No reaction.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Aaand the intercom is out. Because this is the day I'm having and why wouldn't it be?

As she begins to rifle through her bag of equipment:

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Anyway... something did a *serious* number on this electrical panel. No wonder Hera's been losing power, this looks like -

At that moment we hear a GUST OF AIR go through the room. It stops as suddenly as it started. Maxwell looks around, alarmed.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
What the...? What was that?
(beat, followed by a SIGH)
Yeah, definitely too early for this.

As she actually starts tinkering with the wires:

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
In any case, I'm going to have to take this entire array apart before I can even begin to fix the problem.
(snip)
Right now I can't even tell what's connected to what.
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
(snip)
Honestly, how these people survived for so long without a proper engineer I am never going to -

SNIP AND BZZZAP. There's a CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY as 50,000 volts go through Maxwell. She is thrown back from the panel, instantly unconscious.

A moment later, a second, LOUDER ELECTRICAL CRACKLE goes off at the panel, accompanied by SPARKING. And as more and more unhappy sounds build up, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 0645 HOURS

WAAA! WAAA! WAAA! An EMERGENCY KLAXON sounds.

Kepler, Minkowski, Lovelace, Jacobi, Hilbert, and Hera are all gathered around one of the bridge's computer monitor, as it gets filled with data.

A moment later, the DOOR OPENS as Eiffel enters.

EIFFEL
Sorry gang, just got the emergency memo. Who died?
(takes in the tension)
Oh God, who *actually* died?

LOVELACE
No one. Yet.

KEPLER
But Doctor Maxwell's in a situation.

EIFFEL
What kind of situation?

HERA
We're still trying to figure out the specifics, but it appears Doctor Maxwell was doing some repairs to the electrical grid in Standard Lab Seven.

EIFFEL
(lower)
Standard Lab 7? What the hell is that?

MINKOWSKI
(lower)
Tech lab on the aft deck. Haven't really used it for much this mission.

HERA
Sensors show Doctor Maxwell going into SL7 at 0631. About two minutes later, there was a large electrical discharge, and then every system connected to the room went dead.

KEPLER
How big of a discharge? Enough to kill someone?

HILBERT
No... but barely. And all attempts to contact Dr. Maxwell have received no response. Best guess? She was rendered unconscious by the shock.

LOVELACE
Okay, so, let's go in and get Sleeping Beauty. What's the big emergency?

HERA
Remember the part where no systems are responding? That includes the door system.

EIFFEL
Okay... Well, can we see about dismounting the hatch or something? It might take a couple of hours, but we should be able to oh God there's more, isn't there?

HERA
Also offline is the room's *ventilation* system.

MINKOWSKI
(gets it)
Oh.

LOVELACE
(this is bad)
Oh, God...

EIFFEL
And that's baaad... ?

MINKOWSKI
SL7 is directly above the reactor for the aft thruster. And a lot of the excess heat gets vented into that room.

KEPLER
(deadly serious)
Which means...

HERA
... which means that, without the venting system, the temperature is rising. By about a degree a minute. Which, given the atmospheric conditions, and the relative humidity of -

KEPLER
Get to the point.

BEAT. Hera hesitates for a moment - how to put this delicately?

HILBERT
The heat will cook her alive. In hour and a half, she will be dead.

Or, okay, we can put it *not* delicately. Kepler's attention snaps to his second-in-command.

KEPLER
Jacobi?

JACOBI
On it.

KEPLER
How long?

JACOBI
Seventy minutes, to get all the gear in place and do it safely. Sixty with another pair of hands.

KEPLER
Lovelace, you're with Jacobi, do whatever he tells you. Go.

Jacobi turns to go when -

MINKOWSKI
Hold it. What are they going to be doing? Can you at least grace us lesser folk with an explanation?

Kepler's expression hardens as he turns towards her.

KEPLER
Not that I need to do anything of the kind, *Lieutenant*... but Jacobi is going to use a very judicious application of explosives to remove the hatch that is keeping Doctor Maxwell trapped.

MINKOWSKI
What?

KEPLER
I did not ask for opinions from the -

MINKOWSKI
Absolutely not! Have you gone insane?

EIFFEL
Uhhh, yeah, wasn't there something about a thruster? Haven't we learned our lesson about bombs near engines?

MINKOWSKI
It's not just that. Here, look.
(tapping the screen)
That's an O2 line. It runs through the hallway just outside SL7, not two meters away from the hatch you're trying to blow up. You know what happens if you hit that?

EIFFEL
I'm guessing not super fun happy times?

LOVELACE
The words "towering inferno" come to mind...

MINKOWSKI
So you either hit the thruster, which takes out our engines and we all die slowly, or you ignite our oxygen supply and we all die quickly.

JACOBI
Or, and given your track record I understand why this possibility seems so alien to you, I just do my job *right*.

MINKOWSKI
No offense, Jacobi, but no one is that good.

JACOBI
I am that good.

LOVELACE
Right: because if explosives are known for anything, it's for their surgical precision...

JACOBI
I get it, it's dangerous. But it's the only way to get Maxwell out of there before her ninety minutes are up.

MINKOWSKI
Well, maybe we don't have to get her out.

Everyone's attention turns towards Minkowski.

LOVELACE
Minkowski? What are you thinking?

MINKOWSKI
(deep breath)
Look... fire containment system's still online. We flood SL7 with Hera's reserves of liquid nitrogen. That will crash the temperature in the room down to non-fatal levels, which will give us the time we need to open the door with more conventional means. She would be fine, and it would be much less risky for the rest of us. Hilbert, back me up here.

There's a BEAT as Hilbert weighs his words.

HILBERT
Yes, that... *would* work.

LOVELACE
Hold on. Liquid nitro's not exactly friendly. Wouldn't that harm Maxwell?

HILBERT
Hera can administer release rate to avoid complications.

LOVELACE
But the temperature differential *could* put her into shock?

HILBERT
(shrug)
Or cardiac arrest.

JACOBI
No. Out of the question.

MINKOWKSI
But -

JACOBI
Your plan might kill Maxwell!

MINKOWSKI
And your plan might kill everyone! The liquid nitrogen would be *fine*, Hera can keep it within the acceptable range.

HERA
Uhh... yes, that - that sounds... reasonable.

Well that ringing statement of confidence sure did inspire a feeling of comfort in everyone present. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
So... what? We're choosing between the flash freeze that might kill the person we're trying to save... or the big bomb that might turn *all* of us into fire and brimstone? How do we make that call?

KEPLER
You don't. **I** already gave my orders. Jacobi, Lovelace, stop wasting time and go set up.

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Everyone else, you're dismissed. Stay out of the way.

MINKOWSKI
But-

KEPLER
I said *dismissed*, Navigations Officer.

Minkowski's jaw clenches. For a tense BEAT there's silence. And then -

A DOOR OPENS as Minkowski, Hilbert, and Eiffel exit, and we

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 0710 HOURS

Minkowski moves down the hallway, still fuming. Hilbert and Eiffel, Team Dismissed, follow her. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
So... Are we going to blow up?
(beat)
Because if we're going to blow up, then I vote that-

MINKOWSKI
Shut up, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, shutting up now.
(beat)
Umm... also, where are we going? What are we doing?
(beat)
Commander?

MINKOWSKI
We're going to the central ventilation chamber.

EIFFEL
(I don't like where this is going...)
Why... ?

MINKOWSKI
Because that's the only place where we can manually deploy the liquid nitrogen reserves.

EIFFEL
(still confused)
And we are doing that because... ?

MINKOWSKI
Now that the Colonel has given his orders, Hera won't be able to do it by herself. Right?

HERA
That's correct, Lieutenant.

EIFFEL
Ummm... was there some part of that meeting that I didn't get? Because this is starting to give me a very... 007 in *License to Kill* kind of a feel.

HILBERT
Eiffel, please-

EIFFEL
No, no, what is happening? Are - are we going *rogue*? Because, if we're going rogue-

Minkowski spins around to face him, snapping.

MINKOWSKI
(snap)
Eiffel! We have maybe fifty-five minutes until Jacobi's bomb blows us up, so we need to make this problem go away right the hell now. We don't have time for this, okay?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
What about a rogue high five? Do we have time for a rogue five?

With a DISGUSTED GROAN, Minkowksi turns back towards the hallway.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I can't believe what I'm seeing. You're going against a direct order from a superior office. *You*! It's like finding out Santa Clause *does* exist after all! Oooh, Colonel Kepler is going to be so mad at you.

MINKOWSKI
I couldn't care less what the Colonel thinks.

They've reached the end of a hallway. Minkowski PRESSES a BUTTON, and a DOOR SLIDES OPEN. They step through it, into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CENTRAL VENTILATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The HUM of various COMPLICATED MACHINES greets them as they enter.

EIFFEL
Whoa. That's... that's a lot of buttons.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I know you can't actively go against orders, but I may need help remembering which console corresponds to which room.

HERA
Pulling up the schematics now.

EIFFEL
So... I'm still a bit fuzzy on the details of this plan. What happens when we pull all the shiny levers?

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH: grant me patience...

MINKOWSKI
The plan, as I told you, is to deploy Liquid Nitrogen into SL7 in less than sixty minutes so that we don't all die.

She starts tinkering with the controls.

EIFFEL
But... wasn't there something about exact right amounts? And how calibrating that was going to be difficult? *Difficult for Hera difficult*?

MINKOWSKI
Well, it's a good thing we have a genius biologist on hand, isn't it? Doctor, I assume that you can help us regulate the deployment rate?

HILBERT
Adjusting system should not be problem.
(beat)
Minkowski, I assume the thought has crossed your mind...

MINKOWSKI
(shut up)
Of course it has.

EIFFEL
Wait, what?

HILBERT
And?

There's a LONG BEAT as Minkowski works on a console. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
(beat)
I don't know.

EIFFEL
What thought?
(beat)
Guys, really not the time to send me off to the kiddie table. **What. Thought?**

BEAT. FINALLY -

MINKOWSKI
There might be - there **is** an opportunity here.

EIFFEL
Opportunity for what?

HILBERT
Strategic advantage. Liquid nitrogen is **very** complicated solution. Very... *difficult* to get right. Very easy to tip over into a lethal dose.

EIFFEL
You're not saying what I think you're saying...

HILBERT
Would be impossible to prove it was intentional. Even I could make mistake. Plenty of plausible deniability.

EIFFEL
Commander, Kepler would kill you!

MINKOWSKI
Maybe. But if we were completely expendable, he would've killed us the day he arrived. And there's precedent for independent action to prevent damage to the station. We might get away with it.

EIFFEL
What?! Commander, you know how tingly I get every time you break out your Sarah Connor game, but are you listening to yourself! This is *murder*!

MINKOWSKI
Well, what do you want me to do? Play it safe! Wait for the right moment! That's what we all agreed to do when Kepler first showed up, remember? How did you think this was going to end?!
(beat, softer)
You think I want to do this? But... it's a chance to make our lives one-third *less dangerous*. We have to consider it.

EIFFEL
Okay. I'm considering it. And oh look: now that I've considered it for two seconds I can tell you this is a <u>terrible idea</u>!

HERA
I agree. This is wrong.

HILBERT
And *I* think we must not waste this opportunity simply because *some* of us find it unsavory.

EIFFEL
(deadpan)
I'm shocked, shocked to find that gambling's going on in here.

MINKOWSKI
(steadily)
Everybody. Calm. Down. I haven't made any decisions. For now, I just need to figure out how to deploy the nitrogen. Once we do that... then I'll decide what to do.

EIFFEL
Or... we can take a vote? You know, like the last time we didn't murder anyone? Remember that?

HERA
Yeah, if I learned to live with *that*, I think you're going to be more than capable of dropping this.

MINKOWSKI
Watch it, both of you. This isn't up for discussion.

HERA
Do you even know who you sound like right now?

EIFFEL
Because it sure as hell isn't Commander Minkowski. I rescind my rogue five!

MINKOWSKI
(snapping)
Oh yeah, and you're one to talk! You've never hurt anyone, right? Never done anything wrong? Take back whatever you want, Eiffel, but you are not in a position to judge me right now!

BEAT. Awkward silence.

EIFFEL
Commander... I'm sorry. But I don't think -

MINKOWKSI
You made it pretty clear what you think, Eiffel.
(beat)
Doctor, help me finish setting up.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 0730

Right outside of SL7. Jacobi and Lovelace work to rig the door.

JACOBI
Pliers.

She hands him the pliers.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
The wrench.

She gives him the wrench.

LOVELACE
Sooo... how long have you been doing this kind of stuff?

JACOBI
(not looking up)
Long enough.

LOVELACE
Maxwell always getting herself into scrapes?

JACOBI
Not really. First time.

Rather than displaying his usual chatterbox tendencies, Jacobi is working with a steely, serene expertise.

LOVELACE
Jacobi - are you good to do this?

JACOBI
Watch and learn.

LOVELACE
No, that's not what I meant.
(to herself))
Though... I'll believe it when I see it.
(slow and pointed: listen to what I'm saying)
Are you good to do this? Friend in danger, lot of pressure, and for the first time since you stepped on board, the room you're in is relatively quiet. You're not concerned that your judgment might be impaired at all?

JACOBI
No, I'm not.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
(sooo careful)
Okay. I'm only saying that *if*, if it was? It would be -

JACOBI
If I were the one in trouble, she would be exactly as smart as she needed to be to get me out. So I'm going to do the same for her.

BEAT. Lovelace SMILES. She does understand.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
What?

LOVELACE
Nothing.

JACOBI
Copper.

She hands it to him. After a moment:

LOVELACE
But... you do realize that, to do this, you may need to be *impossibly* smart. Emphasis on the impossibly.

JACOBI
If that's what it takes, then that's what I do.

LOVELACE
But -

But suddenly Kepler is looming over their shoulders.

KEPLER
Jacobi. Sitrep?

JACOBI
We're on schedule, sir. Shouldn't be more than another fourteen minutes.

KEPLER
Good. Keep at it.

At that moment, there's a crackle from the loudspeaker.

HERA
Colonel?

KEPLER
Yes, Hera?

HERA
There's... there's something that I need to bring to your attention, sir.

Oh God... Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CENTRAL VENTILATION CHAMBER - 0740 HOURS

Minkowski, Hilbert, and Eiffel are studying the consoles, making adjustments here and there as they try to beat the clock.

MINKOWSKI
So we hit these two to arm the system?

HILBERT
Correct. Then the third switch to deploy. But I will need another five minutes to adjust the mix for a non-lethal dose. Or we could deploy now if you wanted to -

EIFFEL
(beaucoup d'emphatic)
But we **don't** want to, and it's a good thing too because that would be **wrong**. Right, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Quiet, Eiffel. I need to -

BUZZER. There's the sound of a call coming in through the Comms. Everyone's eyes turn towards Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(quietly)
No one say anything. Let me do the talking.
(beat - then CLICK)
Minkowski here.

KEPLER
(over comms)
Lieutenant. I don't remember giving you the clearance to do *anything* in the Central Ventilation Chamber. Care to explain what is happening?

MINKOWSKI
And how did the Colonel know where we were... *Hera*?

HERA
You'll thank me one day. I promise.

MINKOWSKI
We'll see about that.
(at Kepler)
I'm doing what I have to. What is best for everyone on this ship.

KEPLER
Really? Because to me this just looks like *rank insubordination*. You should know better, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
What can I say: guess I'm not very smart.

KEPLER
Well, then I'll make it real simple for you. If you do *anything* to interfere with this rescue op I will hold you personally responsible.

EIFFEL
Sir, please, this is all a big -

KEPLER
My patience with mutineers is nonexistent, Officer Eiffel. Keep that in mind while you decide how to finish that thought.

MINKOWSKI
Don't. He's just following orders. I'm the one you want. And I'm not letting you go through with this insanity.

KEPLER
You're making a big mistake.

MINKOWSKI
Well, come and stop me. Oh wait, it's going to take you ten minutes to get down here from the bridge. Ten minutes *that you don't have*. Too bad. Stand by for nitrogen deployment.

KEPLER
Don't say I didn't warn you.

And with that, Kepler hangs up with a BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Umm... did that sound kinda ominous to anyone else?

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, get the mix ready. Right the hell now.

HERA
Lieutenant - !

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I have nothing to say to you right -

HERA
Oh, get over yourself! Listen: Colonel Kepler just ordered Jacobi to arm the device. They're detonating *right now*.

EIFFEL
What?! Okay, that's definitely bad. We are definitely in the lands of -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, shut up.

She hits a switch, and we get the COMMS BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Kepler, what the **hell** do you think you're doing?

KEPLER
Ending this nonsense.

MINKOWSKI
Don't try to play this game. I was right there, remember? Jacobi still needs another seven minutes.

KEPLER
Actually, he needs seven more minutes to do *calibrations*. But the device is in place, we've cleared the area, the system's armed... We're ready to do this.

MINKOWSKI
Are you insane? Now you're **really** going to blow us up!

KEPLER
Maybe. Maybe it all turns out fine. If only there wasn't this rogue agent forcing my hand. Maybe then I wouldn't have to take such an unnecessary risk...

MINKOWSKI
You honestly think I'm going to -

KEPLER
Jacobi, set a timer. Ninety seconds.

Through the comms channel, we hear the CHIRP of a timer.

JACOBI
(through comms)
Done.

KEPLER
Lieutenant... stand by for detonation.

And with that we get another BUZZER as Kepler closes the comms line.

EIFFEL
What the hell is happening!? Is Kepler *actually* about to blow up the station?

HILBERT
Of course not, Eiffel. Foolish risk. This is test.

MINKOWSKI
He wants to know if we're bluffing.

EIFFEL
Oh how sad, that's our bluff totally and completely called. And now it's time to fold and **get off the crazy train.**
(beat)
Commander?!

BEAT.

HERA
Sixty seconds, Lieutenant.

HILBERT
He is giving you no choice. We have to deploy. **Right now.**

EIFFEL
No, no, no, no. Don't listen to -

MINKOWKSI
Arm the system, Doctor.

Hilbert FLIPS the first TWO SWITCHES. The system WHIRRS as it prepares to deploy the liquid nitrogen.

EIFFEL
(low)
Commander, *please*. Don't do this. You heard him just now. He **will** kill you. You have to let Jacobi do this. He's... *probably* that good.

MINKOWSKI
And what if he's not?

HERA
Thirty seconds.

Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL
Then we all go together. We finally do something as a crew.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Minkowski?

For a LONG BEAT this hangs in the air. FINALLY -

MINKOWSKI
Goddammit!

Minkowski hits a switch, and we get the COMMS BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Kepler! Stop!

KEPLER
Jacobi - hold the counter.

We hear a CHIRP through the Comms.

MINKOWSKI
We're - we're standing down. We'll do it your way. Hilbert, shut it down.

We hear Eiffel and Hilbert EXHALE - Eiffel with relief, Hilbert with resignation. Hilbert HITS THE FIRST TWO SWITCHES, shutting down the system.

KEPLER
Excellent choice, Lieutenant. Excellent choice.
(beat)
Jacobi: run final checks, then detonate.

There's another BUZZER as the line closes. Eiffel pats Minkowski's shoulder.

EIFFEL
Thank you, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Don't thank me yet. I may have just killed us all.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I'm still gonna thank you.

For a BEAT there's silence. Then -

BOOM - we hear the explosion in the distance. Everyone holds their breath as the STATION BUCKLES AND SHAKES... And then -

BUZZER.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
It's okay, kids, relax. Detonation blew through the door, but it didn't hit the engines or the O2 line. We're in the clear.

We hear three SIGHS OF RELIEF. On Lovelace's side of the line, we hear some scuffling.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Better get your ass down to the lab, Doctor. You've got a patient in critical condition.

HILBERT
Roger that... I'm on my way.

Another BUZZER as the line closes. Hilbert looks at Minkowski and Eiffel.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Well... I suppose that is that.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah... I suppose it is.

After a moment, Hilbert OPENS THE DOOR, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1500 HOURS

Hilbert is tending to Maxwell, who now has a breathing apparatus on. Jacobi is right next to her, with Hilbert tending to her.

Behind them, at the door to the lab, is Eiffel. He speaks with Hera in low whispers:

HERA
It looks like she'll be fine. She didn't get a concussion, or any long-lasting heat damage. Hilbert says it'll be a couple of days, but she'll make a full recovery.

EIFFEL
So, Jacobi really did it, huh?

HERA
It was very precise. Exactly enough force to bust through the door, but not enough to hit anything else. All the calculations were perfect.

EIFFEL
I don't know if I find that comforting or terrifying...

At that moment -

JACOBI
Hey, Doc! She's waking up!

We hear Maxwell COUGH as she comes back to.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Whoa there, easy, easy. You're gonna be okay.

She takes off her oxygen mask.

MAXWELL
(weakly)
Wha... What happened?

HILBERT
Doctor Maxwell, I recommend you keep the oxygen mask on for the time being.

MAXWELL
I'm fine. What happened?

JACOBI
Well, the long and short of it is that you got yourself into a life or death situation, and thanks to me it became just a life situation.

MAXWELL
Oh, ha-ha.

She COUGHS.

JACOBI
You cut the wrong wire.

MAXWELL
I never cut the wrong wire.

JACOBI
Well, you did this time. Face it, I'm your savior. But it's okay; we'll wait until you're better before all the groveling at my feet begins.

MAXWELL
(scoffs)
Fat chance...
(beat)
Thank you.

JACOBI
You're welcome.
(deep breath)
You're welcome.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - 1900 HOURS

Minkowski and Kepler. He takes in the space. Lovelace at the door.

KEPLER
I have to admit, this is an... elegant solution. Isolated. No essential crew functions. And the view's a nice touch. Don't you think so, Captain?

LOVELACE
(let's just get this over with)
Yes, Colonel.

KEPLER
Yeah... Observation deck. As far as brigs go, Minkowski, I think this was an *inspired* choice.

MINKOWSKI
(curt)
Whatever you say.

KEPLER
Lieutenant... I think I owe you an apology.

Minkowski just looks at him: where are you going with this?

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You stood up for what you thought was right. You analyzed the situation, and you concluded that I was taking an unacceptable risk with the crew, the ship, and the mission. And you acted accordingly. I can respect that.
(beat)
And that respect? It's the only reason why I'm letting you're getting off so easy. I want you to appreciate that this is the last friendly warning you'll get from me. If you *ever* disobey my orders again, Minkowski, we'll be settling matters in a somewhat less... *civil* fashion. Are we clear?

No response.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I said, are we clear?

Still no response. Kepler turns away from her and walks towards the door.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
All right, then. Mull it over.

He's arrived at the door.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Master-At-Arms, I trust that you'll see that our friend here is well taken care of. Three weeks. Solitary.

Lovelace takes a DEEP BREATH... but, finally...

LOVELACE
Aye-aye... sir.

Kepler nods at her, turns back towards Minkowski.

KEPLER
Enjoy your time off... Lieutenant.

And with that, he leaves SLAMMING THE DOOR SHUT WITH AN ECHOING THUD.

For a LONG BEAT, all is silence and stillness. And then we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 36.

WOLF 359

"OVERTURE"

by

Sarah Shachat

(Note: This episode begins on Day 990 and ends on Day 992 of the Hephaestus Mission)

START EPISODE 37:

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1100 HOURS

Kepler presides over the bridge, tensely alert. Behind him are Eiffel and Maxwell, more impatient than expectant.

They're connected to Jacobi and Lovelace through the Comms.

KEPLER
Jacobi? Report.

JACOBI
(over comms)
Just finishing up the final checks, boss. We'll be ready for launch in just a few minutes.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
Oh really? Because I was starting to think that there was no time here... in the Sixth Circle of Hell...

KEPLER
I'm sure Mr. Jacobi appreciates your help with the adjustments, Captain.

JACOBI
And your patience. Big fan of the patience.

LOVELACE
Happy to be of assistance.

MAXWELL
Do I have time to run a quick -

EIFFEL
No!

KEPLER
No!

MAXWELL
Okay then. Just asking.

JACOBI
Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Are we ready for my close-up?

JACOBI
See? Eiffel gets it.

EIFFEL
(clears throat)
Laaadies and gentlemen, welcome to today's Deep Space Probe Launch. In the center ring, meet the amazing signal amplification module, Wall-E Number Nine! Prepare to marvel as this brave little toaster gets - *hopefully* - pumpkin-chucked to the other side of the star!

He hits the controls. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aaand... Comms are a-go.

HERA
Probe is transmitting loud and clear, Mr. Jacobi.

JACOBI
Thanks, Hera. But since it's still inside the Hephaestus, I'll hold off on my celebratory gloating.

MAXWELL
Uh, could we get that in writing...?

KEPLER
Two minutes, everyone. Focus. Dr. Maxwell, how are the trajectory vectors looking?

MAXWELL
Hera and I modeled them out and everything in that department looks good. The *math* is perfect.

JACOBI
You're implying something *else* is less than perfect?

MAXWELL
Hmm, what did you call this test, Eiffel? Wall-E Number <u>Nine</u>?

JACOBI
Shut up.
(to Lovelace)
All right. Let's get clear.

LOVELACE
Don't have to tell me twice.

KEPLER
Dr. Maxwell? Hera?

HERA
All three stages of the rocket and launch system are responsive, sir.

MAXWELL
And all guides are up and in the green.

KEPLER
Very well. Jacobi?

JACOBI
Ready, sir.

KEPLER
Prepare to launch the module on my mark. Three... Two... One... Mark.

From the bridge, we can't hear the launcher activate or fire, but we do get a series of DINGS and BEEPS as the monitors begin to pick up readings.

HERA
Module is... away. The trajectory is consistent with the flight plan.

KEPLER
Do we have a lock on the sensor readings?

MAXWELL
For now.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
So... anybody got a pack of cards, or...

KEPLER
(pointed)
How do my comms look, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Five by five, Colonel.

KEPLER
Excellent.

HERA
The module's initializing stage two disconnect, preparing to activate orbit stabilization.

KEPLER
When will we know if the module is on a stable orbit, Hera?

HERA
Well, it should send a ping when the stage three systems have engaged. Otherwise, we'll hear a -

And that's when we hear the great, angry BUZZER of failure.

HERA (CONT'D)
Ah.
(beat)
It looks like the module's stabilizers failed to engage properly. It's -

Huge GROAN from everyone on the bridge.

HERA (CONT'D)
- fallen into a degrading orbit, and will shortly be consumed by the star.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Well... that went well.

MAXWELL
(scoffing)
Yeah.

JACOBI
No, I'm serious. Once we crunch some numbers, Colonel, I can start prep on the next trial.

LOVELACE
Have you... did you *not* process what *just* happened?
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
The module is about three hours away from being incinerated.

JACOBI
Look, Captain. I know you may be new to this -

LOVELACE
Excuse me?

JACOBI
- but we in the ballistics community have certain criteria by which we measure success. What *just* happened? We just achieved launch and system transitions. Our probe just communicated with both the Hephaestus hard comms and with Hera. And it just angled itself on a far-range orbit at the limit of the star's gravitational field. We only missed the optimal vector by... how much, Hera?

HERA
About 547, Mr. Jacobi.

JACOBI
Exactly! That's a solid nine out of ten.

EIFFEL
547 feet isn't that bad, I guess.

HERA
547 *miles*, Eiffel.

LOVELACE
<u>Miles</u>?!

HERA
That's correct.

Eiffel, Lovelace, and Maxwell all have to take a moment to process this. And the amount of their lives it's wasted.

LOVELACE
Okay. Okay. That's it.

JACOBI
Did you not hear the part about criteria for success?

EIFFEL
Yeah, sorry, but I'm with the Captain. Survey says all the other stuff doesn't matter if you can't keep your dinghy from being swallowed up by the big blue whale out there.

JACOBI
Just because it didn't work, doesn't mean it doesn't work! You two have to think about the bigger picture here.

EIFFEL
I'm not sure this looks any better in IMAX...

MAXWELL
No, everyone. Listen. Jacobi's *exactly* right.

HERA
He is?

JACOBI
It's one of my chief virtues.

MAXWELL
We *do* have to think about the big picture. We have to think about how many more of our limited resources we're going to spend on a project that, well... only ever scores a nine out of ten.

JACOBI
Hey! That was -

Kepler CLEARS HIS THROAT. Silence falls over the crowd.

KEPLER
Mr. Jacobi? While there shouldn't be anyone here - especially after the last couple weeks - who doubts your abilities, this project *is* taking a hell of a lot longer than our initial projections. So I need you to take your pride out of the equation and <u>use your head</u>.
(beat)
Is this going to work?

BEAT.

JACOBI
Yes, sir. It will.

KEPLER
Very well. Start working with Maxwell on the analysis. Everyone else? You're dismissed.

JACOBI
Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

Jacobi CLICKS OFF his comms link. Maxwell gets up to leave.

EIFFEL
Hold on. Colonel... that's it? He gets to keep trying... what, because he said so? Just like that?

KEPLER
Yeah. Just like that.

HERA
Why?

KEPLER
Because he's earned it. Anything else, Officer Eiffel?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
No, sir.

KEPLER
Good. Dismissed.

That sorted, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HALLWAY - TEN MINUTES LATER

Eiffel is walking back towards the comms room, still blowing off steam.

EIFFEL
I'm just saying. If we're looking at another week of Avengers Assemble-ing a protocol droid that doesn't work? We should have a later wake-up call.

HERA
(distracted)
Mm-hmm.

EIFFEL
It's not exactly great for morale when you know all your work's just getting thrown into the Fires of Mount Doom. You know? But if I could get an extra hour's lie-in and maybe a breakfast burrito? Then I'd be happy to teach your flux capacitor some Morse Code.

HERA
Yeah... That sounds great.

EIFFEL
A motivated workplace: it's what I'm all about.

HERA
Mmmm. I - okay, that's weird.

EIFFEL
Hera? You all right?

When Hera responds, it's with more glitching than usual.

HERA
Huh? Yeah, yeah. It's just Jacobi's module. It's still transmitting.

EIFFEL
It hasn't fallen into Bug Zapper 359 yet?

HERA
No, it won't do that for a couple hours. It's not, I'm just... I'm trying to untangle the readings.

EIFFEL
What do you mean, "untangle?" What's going on with the readings?

HERA
They're... interesting. It's... it's almost like -

But before we can find out what the signal is almost like, a couple things happen in very quick succession:

The first is that Hera's voice CUTS OUT completely.

The second is that after a moment of painful FEEDBACK, the loudspeakers throughout the station are OVERRIDDEN by the signal the module is transmitting.

But the best/worst part is the signal. The signal is the dramatic rising action of Tchaikovsky's 1812 OVERTURE.

EIFFEL
Oh... that can't possibly be good.

No. It can't. The Hephaestus is ROCKED by a powerful blast of turbulence, tossing Eiffel against a wall. He YELPS in pain and panic.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

An alarm starts to RING, and the station starts to SHAKE -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera, what is going -

But the music is still building: **Ba-Da-Da-Da-Ba-Da-Da-Da-BOOM.** The station is rocked by another concussive blast.

Eiffel is SLAMED against the floor.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
OW! Goddam -

The storm is still going: **Ba-Da-Da-Da-Ba-Da-Da-Da-BANG!**

And as the Hephaestus BUCKLES from the biggest blast so far, we hear a LOUD CRASH and then -

SILENCE.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 15 MINUTES LATER

We hear the sound of a LARGE SHEET OF METAL being lifted. Eiffel GROANS in pain. The music is gone, and we can hear the ship also GROANING as the Hephaestus stabilizes.

JACOBI
Colonel, I've got him!

As Jacobi helps Eiffel up, Kepler approaches. Lovelace, Hilbert, and Maxwell (holding her iPad device) are right behind him.

KEPLER
Eiffel? You doing all right?

EIFFEL
(cough, cough)
Fine... fine, Colonel. Barely... barely felt that.
(cough)
Everyone else all right?

KEPLER
We're all pretty banged up, but nobody seems to be in critical condition.

EIFFEL
What the hell happened?

HILBERT
Flare and stellar wind. The star's activity has increased. Dramatically.

EIFFEL
Ugh. Should we be worried about - No, better question: <u>what</u> should we be worried about?

KEPLER
We were able to compensate for the turbulence and get the station stable.

The station SHUDDERS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
For now. But since we're all accounted for, I want a damage report on all ship functions.

MAXWELL
(consulting her iPad)
Hera says that the ship's infrastructure wasn't damaged by the blast. Not too badly, anyway.

EIFFEL
Whoa there, Cowgirl. Hera can talk for herself.
(beat)
... right, Hera?

MAXWELL
Uhh, not exactly. Whatever's going on, it's still overriding all our speaker functions.
(re: iPad)
I'm having to translate directly from Hera's thought stream.

EIFFEL
What?! What - what gives you the - Here, give me that.

He SNATCHES Maxwell's iPad, and looks at it. BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
This is just lots and lots of ones and zeros.

MAXWELL
Yes.
(taking back her iPad)
Which is why we should let the person who can read advanced binary do the translating.

EIFFEL
But how do we know that you're not... you know, completely full of crap?

There's a POP, and for a second the Tchaikovsky COMES BACK IN on the PA system. And then OUT again.

MAXWELL
She's saying... "stuff that in your breakfast burrito, we have bigger things to worry about." I assume that means something to you?

Eiffel lets out a DISGUSTED GROAN, which is cut off by -

KEPLER
Ladies. Gentlemen. Not to put too fine a point on it, but **get to your stations** and **get me reports. <u>Right now</u>.**

Okay, then. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1300 HOURS

Eiffel and Maxwell are working on the signal. We hear some WIRES SPARKING and some MECHANICAL TINKERING.

MAXWELL
How about now?

Pause for STATIC, signifying absolutely nothing.

EIFFEL
No. Damn, I wonder if I can just...

He FLICKS SOME SWITCHES. Nothing happens.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Damn.

MAXWELL
Hera says -

EIFFEL
(louder, irritated)
Is that right, Hera? Flicker the lights once if by land and two if by "see, she's lying, **don't trust her.**"

Maxwell SIGHS.

MAXWELL
We seriously do not have time for this. All she's trying to ask is if you might be able to verify -

EIFFEL
Yeah, except as far as I know it's *you* asking. So I'm gonna keep doing what I'm doing.

MAXWELL
Mashing buttons and hoping a random combination will be able to isolate the signal?

EIFFEL
Works for Goldeneye. Just stay on your side and keep trying with the frequencies.

Eiffel starts tinkering with the console.

MAXWELL
(to herself)
Gosh, thanks, Maxwell! It's really great you're around to help the crew communicate with our autopilot. And it was *so* impressive how quickly you were able to route the signal into the comms console.

EIFFEL
(over his shoulder)
Hera's better at the passive-aggressive thing, too, you know.

Hera takes exception to that, and expresses her annoyance by sending a small ELECTRIC SHOCK through the console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow! Hey!

Maxwell SNIGGERS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?!

MAXWELL
(clears throat)
"I'm still here. I'm *always* here. So stop worrying about me, Officer Eiffel. We need to isolate the signal before the next emergency. So just be here, and talk to us."

BEAT. Eiffel smiles.

EIFFEL
Okay. Okay, fair enough.
(beat)
Sorry, Maxwell.

MAXWELL
You're not. But, thanks.

Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
We need to backtrack for second and think about this.

MAXWELL
Okay...

EIFFEL
First, we send a probe off into the wild blue yonder. It ends up caught in Wolf 359's tractor beams, and all that's supposed to happen is charcoal. But next thing we know, the British are coming into our airwaves -

MAXWELL
It's the Russians actually, but sure.

EIFFEL
And as long as the module's bouncing its transmission to us, all our relay systems, including the PA, are stuck in war of 1812-mode. So either our alien pals are about to blow up the Houses of Parliament...

MAXWELL
Or there's something else embedded in the music. Some other information that's actually causing the override. The question is, can we isolate it?

EIFFEL
Maybe? But even a full system sweep could take hours to nail that down. And I don't speak sound-wave.

MAXWELL
Which is why I've been *trying* to find corresponding anomalies within the transmission layers.

EIFFEL
Yeah, but even if you did, they'd be useless unless we could somehow...
(beat)
Wait. Wait, wait, wait. Wait on line at the DMV *wait*.

MAXWELL
What?

EIFFEL
I just has a really dumb idea.

On that promising note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1330 HOURS

Eiffel, Maxwell, Hilbert, Lovelace, Jacobi, and Kepler, all gathered. Eiffel's just finished explaining something.

KEPLER
How feasible is this?

HILBERT
In principle, another module *would* allow us to divert the signal -

EIFFEL
And let us analyze the real Slim Shady without a dozen French horns in the way.

KEPLER
And that would work?

EIFFEL
Yes - **if** we can get another sound magnet in the air to control and sort through what we're getting.

HILBERT
Which will not be *easy*.

LOVELACE
We don't have much of a window to get it right, either. Module hits the star in under two hours.

JACOBI
I can get it right.

KEPLER
Doctor Maxwell?

MAXWELL
The only problem - well, the only big problem - well, the only *gigantic* problem I see is the launch point. We can't get the secondary module in the right place from our current location.

KEPLER
So we have to move the station?

HILBERT
Quickly and accurately, which none of us can do without verbal guidance from mother program.

KEPLER
And why is that?

HILBERT
Because the continued flare activity has resulted in powerful gravitational fluctuations. Right now, we are in relatively stable pocket, but if station moves, we will have no protection from kinetic shockwaves.

EIFFEL
And adapted for an American audience, that means... ?

HILBERT
Death. It means death, Officer Eiffel.

Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
Well... death is bad.

LOVELACE
Insights from Doug Eiffel, ladies and gentlemen.

EIFFEL
It was just a thought. I - thanks for hearing me out, anyway. And even if we miss this opportunity, at least we know -

KEPLER
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Officer Eiffel, who said anything about missing this opportunity?

There's a HORRIFIED BEAT.

LOVELACE
You can't be serious.

EIFFEL
What about the... Death Vortex of Death?

KEPLER
Maxwell? Work with Hera and Hilbert on a flight plan and launch trajectories, please.

MAXWELL
On it, sir.

KEPLER
And Captain Lovelace? I'm sure Mr. Jacobi could use a hand. He's got a rather involved build and it needs to happen quickly.

JACOBI
I'd appreciate it.

Lovelace, Eiffel, and Hilbert all look at each other, mouths open. Why is the opposite of sanity happening today?

EIFFEL
Sir, I -

KEPLER
I wants status reports in 15 minutes. Eiffel? With me.

Kepler doesn't wait, but OPENS the door. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel heads out after Kepler.

EIFFEL
Uh, Colonel? Sir? You maybe want to stop and think about this before we commit to -

KEPLER
It's a bold plan. We've got challenges and we've gotta overcome them quickly, but -

EIFFEL
Sir. Due respect. But I do not want opening my big mouth about this to be the last regret I ever have. What Hilbert said... It doesn't sound like this is something we can get a nine out of ten on.

Kepler stops, turns back, and looks at Eiffel.

KEPLER
It's not. But I'm not wasting a chance at some real intelligence because the odds are long. I've faced longer and so, by the way, have you.

EIFFEL
But sir. I'm not -
(beat)
This morning, you asked Jacobi to stop and use his head. Have you done that? Are we sure about this?

KEPLER
I'm sure.
(beat)
Go back to the comms room. Get set up. I want us ready to pick apart this signal ASAP.

EIFFEL
What are you going to do?

KEPLER
Same thing you're going to do, Officer Eiffel: something I don't particularly want to.

And as he moves off, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - THE BRIG - 10 MINUTES LATER

The door OPENS.

KEPLER
Let's go.

MINKOWSKI
(not going)
What, did you miss me?

KEPLER
I gave you an order, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
And look at all these damns I'm giving about it.

KEPLER
Lieutenant. You have work to do. I'm not fooling around.

MINKOWSKI
Neither am I. I've got six more days to think long and hard about what I've done. You pull that card, you fly your own damn ship.

KEPLER
You're not even the least bit curious about what's happening? The turbulence? The music?

MINKOWSKI
Tchaikovsky's all right. I'm really more of a Chopin girl, myself.

Kepler takes a moment to consider Minkowski.

KEPLER
When did you know you wanted to go to outer space?

MINKOWSKI
When - *what*?

KEPLER
When did you know? Two, five, twelve, what?

MINKOWSKI
Why the hell do you care?

KEPLER
Because I know that sulking in a glorified fish bowl isn't what you signed up for. It certainly isn't what I had in mind.
(he laughs)
What you **really** want? It's out there, right now, Lieutenant. It's waiting for you.

MINKOWSKI
What I want is for you get out and lock the door behind you.

KEPLER
Sure. But not as much as you want to hear what an alien intelligence has to say for itself.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
If only so that you can protect our people from it.

BEAT. Minkowski EXHALES, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1400 HOURS

KEPLER
All right, everyone. Full attention.

The whole crew is gathered for a briefing.

MINKOWSKI
This is how it's gonna work. In order to get the booster module in the air and operational before the probe burns up, we actually need to fly closer to the star. We're gonna have to go right up to the red line, which means -

HILBERT
What?!

KEPLER
Settle down. Lieutenant?

MINKOWSKI
Which means we'll need a team in engine control as well as sight guides in the bridge and the observation deck.

LOVELACE
Hera can't handle that on her own?

MAXWELL
Hera's got about a 500-mile margin of error. To do this, we'll need to be within 200. So, team effort.

EIFFEL
Dare I ask what happens if we step, like, a toe over the margin?

MINKOWSKI
We get pulled into the star and we die. That's why it's called the red line, Eiffel. Point of no return.

Eiffel GULPS.

LOVELACE
Are you on board with this higher-order idiocy, Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
No. But, I'm here.

EIFFEL
Yeah, gang, I've got the ol', proverbial bad feeling about this.

JACOBI
C'mon. Where's your sense of fun?

HILBERT
Violent decompression and explosive force do not generally qualify as "fun."

JACOBI
Sounds like the perfect Sunday afternoon to me.

LOVELACE
Look, it seems like a neat way to die, but I'd rather not go out trying something this stupid.

KEPLER
How would you like to go out, Captain?

LOVELACE
What?

KEPLER
I asked, how would you like to go out? What would you rather die trying to do? I know we came up here at different times, but first contact was always the Holy Grail. And now it's in front of us, on a plate, and you're... what? Scared?
(to Jacobi)
Jacobi, are you tired of having to treat your fellow crew mates like toddlers?

JACOBI
Oh my God, you have no idea.

KEPLER
What about you, Doctor Maxwell? Would you prefer if your colleagues started acting like the professionals they can be?

MAXWELL
That'd be great, yeah.

KEPLER
Everything we've ever tried to do is within our reach. But we have to earn it. We have to do our jobs. And yes, those jobs are impossible. They are scary. But I would think that by now, you all might be tired of being scared.
(beat)
Look. We aren't on the sidelines. We are doing this. So I invite you, formally, to **screw** your doubts, and, for once in your lives, play at our level. It's time to get off the bench.

There is a BEAT as he eyes them all.

HILBERT
There is... perhaps workaround to coordinate the manual controls.

And just like that, we're in business.

KEPLER
All right, then. Let's get to work.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINE CONTROL ROOM - 1415 HOURS

Eiffel and Kepler on engine duty. The ship is en-route.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Three minutes. Everyone hold on, this is about to get bumpy.

WOMP. The ship's knocked around.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Launch bay, are you ready?

JACOBI
(over comms)
We're in position.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
All guides up and in the green.

SHAKE. We begin to hear URGENT BEEPING from the #2 Engine.

MINKOWSKI
Engine control?

EIFFEL
Starting to pick up some buzz, but Team Scotty's on the case.

KEPLER
How much power do you need on the approach, Lieutenant?

BAM! SHAKE! BUZZT! This is not sounding great.

MINKOWSKI
(still unfazed)
I need all ahead full, Colonel. Guide one?

HILBERT
(over comms)
Copy.

MINKOWSKI
You've gotta keep an eye to port, stop me from drifting.

HILBERT
Affirmative. Is Hera giving you corresponding numbers for the bridge?

BOOM! That was a big one.

MAXWELL
(over comms)
... Yes, we're on it, Doctor. I'm watching starboard and Hera's timing our wave-off.

Kepler hits a switch at the engine controls. DING!

KEPLER
All ahead full, ready on your mark, Lieutenant.

WHAM! Big bang.

MINKOWSKI
Eighty seconds to launch point from my mark. Mr. Jacobi, Captain Lovelace? Good luck.

LOVELACE
Copy that, Lieutenant. Light 'em up.

BEAT. Okay. Here we go.

MINKOWSKI
Three... Two... One... Mark.

Kepler unleashes the engines and the room EXPLODES WITH JET NOISES. The beeping from #2 engine gets even LOUDER. And if that weren't enough, the ship sounds like it's entered something similar to a FLAK BOMBARDMENT.

Comms from the other crew members come in and out, garbled with static. Everything in brackets is barely understandable.

HILBERT
Two degrees [lower] and [mind your balance]!

MAXWELL
Watch your [altitude]!

Something that sounds pretty gigantic BURSTS, and the alarms in the engine room get, inconceivably, ANGRIER.

JACOBI
Payload [ready] but I've [lost the release]! We've got a [problem here]!

LOVELACE
I've got it! I've got it! Give me [a hand]!

EIFFEL
Aargh, damn it! Colonel! I need some help!

Kepler moves to help and between the two of them they're able to CRANK A LEVER to keep the engines at full.

Eiffel's scared, but Kepler -

KEPLER
(shouting over the noise)
You ever ride Space Mountain?

EIFFEL
What?!

KEPLER
Space mountain! Big roller coaster!

EIFFEL
(please listen to me,
crazy person)
Sir, I don't know how much more of
this we can take!

The alarms are going NUTS.

KEPLER
Over a hundred bucks to get into
the park, then lines five hours
long! You believe that?

EIFFEL
Sir, please! The ship can't do
this! We have to pull back!

MINKOWSKI
[EVERYBODY] BRACE! NOW!

BOOOM! It sounds they just flew straight into a thunderclap.

EIFFEL
Sir!

LOVELACE
It's [away]! I repeat, module's
[away]!

There's only one thing that could make this crazier, and it happens. The loudspeakers turn back on, and THE 1812 OVERTURE comes back as the ship continues to SHAKE.

KEPLER
Smile, Officer Eiffel! We get to do
this for free!

Eiffel, despite all the insanity around him, LAUGHS. The two men continue to struggle to hold the engine controls together. The ship SHAKES and STRAINS.

But slowly, the music and the noise dies down, as Minkowski steers them back onto a stable orbit.

After a BEAT, everything gets still. And we hear -

MINKOWSKI
(exhausted)
Slow ahead, Colonel. We're clear.

Kepler TURNS A CRANK, and the last of the engine noise dies.

EIFFEL
Did... Did it work? Did we make it?

BEAT.

HERA
We made it, Officer Eiffel. I've got control of the ship and a lock on the signal. The only thing left to do now is decipher it.

KEPLER
Nice job, everyone. Nice job. Officer Eiffel?
(shakes Eiffel's hand)
Time to go to work.

Yes, indeed. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MESS - 2 DAYS LATER

The first thing we hear is STATIC. And then... MORE STATIC. And then, faintly, a little bit of the MUSIC. But that turns into a SERIES OF BLIPS AND PINGS at random intervals.

Then the whole thing, a recording, gets SWITCHED OFF.

HERA
How many times are you going to listen to that transmission, Officer Eiffel?

Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
As many times as it takes for it to not be an anti-climactic kill-joy.

HERA
You never know. Doctor Maxwell and I might be able to figure it out.

EIFFEL
It's just... Someone's saying *something* here. We went through all that. And we didn't get anything out of it! I think we *earned* at least something!

HERA
I'm not sure that's how it works.

EIFFEL
Mmmm.

The DOOR OPENS, and Minkowski and Jacobi walk in.

JACOBI
... like our old pal The Year 1812, Festival Overture in E Flat Major.

MINKOWSKI
You know the full name?

JACOBI
Opus number 49. Hey, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Hey.

MINKOWSKI
Why do you -

JACOBI
It's the one piece of classical music that has <u>cannons</u> in it. *Of course* I like it.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, no chance you want to help us with some steering modifications later?

EIFFEL
Nah, thanks, Commander. Enjoying my off-rotation.

As Minkowski and Jacobi settle into a corner of the room, another DOOR OPENS.

LOVELACE
Oh. Hey, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Hey, Cap.

Right behind Lovelace, we get -

MAXWELL
Is there still any coffee?

EIFFEL
Yeah, there's a fresh pot on the counter.

MAXWELL
Oh, great. I've been at this signal router optimization thing all day and I'm starting to see -

EIFFEL
Ghosts in the machine?

MAXWELL
Something like that. I'd love to get your input later, Captain, if you're not too busy with the launcher repairs.

LOVELACE
Sure. I can maybe take a look before dinner. You off, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yeah. It's been brought to my attention that I've max'd out my time in the comms room for a while.

MAXWELL
So... you're squatting in the mess?

EIFFEL
Something like that.

Something is different about how everyone is interacting. The bold among us might go so far to call it an air of easiness among the crew.

The door OPENS again. In come Kepler and Hilbert.

KEPLER
Ah, good. You're all here. I believe that Doctor Hilbert has some news worth sharing.

HILBERT
You were right, Doctor Maxwell. About mathematical implications of the transmission's intervals.

MAXWELL
Really? It *is* a countdown?

HILBERT
More like status marker. The star exhibits discrete periods of increased stellar activity. However these transmissions are functioning, those conditions must factor into what is being sent.

EIFFEL
So... what? Everything the aliens are sending through Wolf 359 comes with an expiration date?

HERA
No, more like a delivery schedule, right?

HILBERT
Precisely.

HERA
Do you think you can model it out?

HILBERT
I do not think. I already have.

LOVELACE
And?

KEPLER
And we have a possible date for the next episode. Something big is coming down the pipe, folks. Something very, very big. And it's going to be here in three months.

Well then.

There is a moment of SILENCE, followed by:

ANNOUNCER
Wolf 359 will return on September 5th.

The credits music comes in.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
This has been Wolf 359, by Kinda Evil Genius productions. Tonight's episode was written by Sarah Shachat, and directed by Gabriel Urbina. The roles of Eiffel and Hilbert were played by Zach Valenti. The role of Minkowski was played Emma Sherr-Ziarko. The role of Hera was played by Michaela Swee. The role of Lovelace was played by Cecilia Lynn-Jacobs. The role of Kepler was played by Zach Libresco. The role of Jacobi was played by Noah Masur. And the role of Maxwell was played by Michelle Agresti. Original music by Alan Rodi, and audio recording by Jared Paul.

The credits music concludes, and fades into silence.

There is, in fact, a full fifteen seconds of silence.

And then:

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. Savvy listeners will recognize the sound as the pulse beacon uplink from "The Kumbaya Approach."

It turns into a PHONE RINGING, which gets picked up by -

CUTTER
Right on time. How are you, Warren?

KEPLER
(over comms)
Well, sir. Thank you. You received my after-action report, I trust?

CUTTER
Rachel decrypted it about ten minutes ago, so I only just had time to scan it. But it sounds like you stabilized the situation.

KEPLER
Yes, sir. What do you want me to keep in mind, now that we're collecting some real data?

CUTTER
Continue to observe and report. Expect to prepare a daily update for me until I tell you otherwise.
(MORE)

CUTTER (CONT'D)
My main concern is security. What's your read on the crew?

KEPLER
Their focus is exactly where we want it to be, sir. I've been very careful.

CUTTER
What about your two aides?

KEPLER
Jacobi and Maxwell's idea of trying to get on the inside is poking at my server. I'm not concerned about them, sir.

CUTTER
Good. I know you trust them, but we don't need the circle getting any bigger than it already is.

KEPLER
Yes, Mr. Cutter. I don't think anyone suspects what we're really interested in, sir.

CUTTER
Good, good.
(beat)
So... how *is* Captain Lovelace?

KEPLER
Oh, she's swell. Very strong, very capable. No doubt planning to kill everyone of us.

CUTTER
All within parameters, then?

KEPLER
I've got it under control.

CUTTER
Good. Whatever else happens, I trust your judgment. But we need her, Warren. She's the key to everything we've been working for.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 37.

WOLF 359

"HAPPY ENDINGS"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Days 1010-1012 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING:

BEGIN EPISODE 38.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - STORAGE ROOM - 2300 HOURS

Minkowski, Hilbert, and Lovelace, waiting in a corner of the room, impatient.

After a BEAT - a DOOR OPENS and SHUTS as Eiffel enters.

MINKOWSKI
About time.

EIFFEL
Sorry. Jacobi was with me at the end of the rotation. I had to shake him before I could head this way.

They speak in low, furtive voices. This is clearly not an officially sanctioned meeting. Eiffel looks around at the P.A. speakers.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is Hera already - ?

LOVELACE
We took the receivers in here offline three minutes ago.

EIFFEL
Isn't it about time we got her take on this? She might have some good ideas on how to -

MINKOWSKI
Mm-mm. Sorry, Eiffel. As long as Maxwell's around we have to assume that Hera's servers aren't as private as they used to be.

EIFFEL
Ughh, fine, fine. Let's get this week's meeting of the Midnight Society over with.
(looks around)
So: anyone come up with a good way to kick Colonel Mustard, King Bob-Omb, and Doc Matrix off our space station?
(LONG BEAT)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right then. Good talk. Let's do this again next -

MINKOWSKI
Hold on. Lovelace, any updates on the Urania's armory?

LOVELACE
I'm afraid not. It seems my jurisdiction as master-at-arms doesn't extend that far. But whatever's in there -

MINKOWSKI
We've got to assume it's a lot bigger than anything we have access to. Right.

LOVELACE
What about you, Minkowski? Were you able to make anything out of that tech readout?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I, uh - It's not good.
(BEAT)
All of the Urania's navigation controls are on a biometric lockdown.

Lovelace EXHALES, annoyed.

EIFFEL
Bio whatsuh?

MINKOWSKI
Biometric lockdown. It means navigation won't engage without verifying Colonel Kepler's DNA code.

EIFFEL
Oh...

LOVELACE
So even if we were able to disengage the Urania from the Hephaestus structure -

MINKOWSKI
Which seems less and less likely...

LOVELACE
- in order to actually go anywhere we'd need our top enemy to suddenly decide he wants to do us one *hell* of a solid.

HILBERT
No. We would not.

Everyone's heads turn towards Hilbert, brows furrowed.

MINKOWSKI
... yes, Doctor, we would. The system won't respond unless it -

HILBERT
(darkly)
- unless it can verify Colonel Kepler's DNA. But DNA does not need to come from a living body... does it?

EIFFEL
Could - could you not?

MINKOWSKI
Gentlemen...

EIFFEL
How many times do we have to go over this?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We're not going to just start murdering people -

HILBERT
Perhaps if you were not so quick to dismiss the idea -

MINKOWSKI
ENOUGH.
(BEAT)
That's enough for one night. Everyone get some rest, but stay sharp. Keep your eyes open for anything we might be able to us to our advantage, okay?
(BEAT)
Good luck.

And with that, everyone except Hilbert start to move off.

HILBERT
(under his breath)
Pointless.

Everyone stops. Turn back towards the seething Russian.

EIFFEL
What was that?

HILBERT
Nothing.

EIFFEL
You know, Hilbert, I'm getting real tired of -

But Minkowski holds up a hand: easy.

MINKOWSKI
Hold it.
(to Hilbert)
You got something to say, Doctor? Let's have it.

HILBERT
What is point of looking for opportunity if you do not use it when it appears?
(BEAT)
What do you think is happening here? Where do you think you are? All of your lives are in danger - I suggest you start taking the appropriate measures.

EIFFEL
Oh, that's funny. 'Cuz I've got this memory of **you** telling us to wait for it. To look for the right moment.

HILBERT
(venomous hiss)
And the right moment came, and went, and you did **nothing**!
(BEAT)
You're right, Eiffel. A.I. perspective would be *very* useful. If only A.I. specialist was not around to compromise invaluable source of intelligence...

EIFFEL
We don't do that.

HILBERT
Why not? It would have increased our chances of survival by -

EIFFEL
Because, you twisted piece of insane troll logic, it's not just about surviving. It's about being able to live with ourselves after we get off this tin can, right Commander?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
... yeah. Right.

EIFFEL
Terrific. Could you maybe sound *slightly* more enthusiastic about the whole **not killing people thing**?!

HILBERT
Some people do not have the stomach for what needs to be done.

EIFFEL
And some people have to be dragged, *kicking and screaming*, towards improvement. Consider this your mandatory lesson in humanity for the evening: no one is on board with the Killbert agenda.

HILBERT
No one, Eiffel?
(BEAT)
Captain?

Slowly, three heads turn towards the other person in the room.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
You have been very quiet.

So she has. For a BEAT she just stares at Hilbert evenly.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
You understand. You know how bad things will get. You are not like them. You are -

LOVELACE
(dead cold)
You have ten seconds to get out of this room.

BEAT. Then Hilbert SIGHS, frustrated.

HILBERT
Very well.

After a moment, we hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as he exits.

EIFFEL
Are you all right, Captain? That was -

LOVELACE
I'm **fine**, Eiffel.

There's a CHIRP and a BEEP as Minkowski brings the P.A. system back online.

MINKOWSKI
Welcome back, Hera. Thank you for your patience.

HERA
Not a problem, Lieutenant. How was the... "diagnostics" meeting?

EIFFEL
Oh you know... same old, same old.

And as Eiffel, Minkowski, and Lovelace exchange troubled looks, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - 0200 HOURS (THE NEXT NIGHT)

Lovelace in her quarters, working out with a Resistance Exercise Device. As she does each lift -

LOVELACE
Fifty-two... Fifty-three... Fifty-four...

There's a KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Lovelace climbs off the exercise machine.

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

HILBERT
We need to talk.

The DOOR SWINGS SHUT.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
(through the closed door)
There is something we must discuss!

LOVELACE
It's two in the morning. There is nothing we *have* to discuss at two in the morning!

HILBERT
What about missing ammonia?

BEAT.

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

LOVELACE
What did you say?

HILBERT
Small amounts of ammonia have been removed from the chemical shed. Along with grease solvent, and -

LOVELACE
Get to the point.

HILBERT
I know you have been taking supplies. And I know what you are making with them.

LOVELACE
And what? You going to rat on me?

HILBERT
Don't be absurd. I am glad that someone is taking the necessary measures. And I am glad it is you.

Lovelace's brow furrows deeper. Her crossed arms tighten.

LOVELACE
So what are we discussing, then?

HILBERT
We are discussing cooperation, Captain. And we are discussing... this.

He removes a PLASTIC BAG from his pocket. Tosses it at her. She stares into the bag, frowning.

LOVELACE
What is - ?

HILBERT
Fertilizer. The grounding agent you are missing.

Lovelace's eyes narrow.

LOVELACE
I thought the fertilizer from the greenhouse was all gone.

HILBERT
Yes. Following certain... botanical incidents, I decided its removal from public access would be prudent. But rest assured, I can provide you with more than enough to complete your... project.

LOVELACE
And in exchange... ?

HILBERT
There is a matter in which I require some... assistance. I promise it is nothing untoward. And it is not... unsafe. I just need an hour of your time.

Lovelace SNORTS.

LOVELACE
Oh, that's funny. Hmmph... No, no deal. You're getting as much out of this as I am, so just tell me where the supplies are. I'll handle the rest.

HILBERT
No. That is not how this is going to work.
(BEAT)
Neither one of us likes it, Captain, but we are in this disaster together. It is time we start acting accordingly.

Lovelace stares at him, considering his words. And as she lets out a RESIGNED SIGH, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - CORRIDORS - 0230 HOURS

We follow Hilbert and a very impatient Lovelace as he leads her through the ship.

LOVELACE
So where are we going?

HILBERT
I need someone who knows the station layout. You've been here longer than anyone else.

LOVELACE
Anyone other than *you*.
(BEAT)
And that wasn't an answer.

HILBERT
You will just have to be patient. And trust me.

LOVELACE
Yeah, that'll be the day...

HILBERT
Is it such an implausible concept? The two of us are not so different.

LOVELACE
What a fascinating theory you've got there. Fascinating and *hilarious*.

HILBERT
We're both pragmatists. And after everything that we have been through, I would think that -

LOVELACE
After everything that **we've** been through? Most of the things that **I've** been through are things that **you** put me through.

HILBERT
And none of it was my choice.

LOVELACE
Oh-ho-ho, really? *Really?* That's what you're going to go with?

HILBERT
Command gave me orders. If I didn't follow them, I would -

LOVELACE
Your virus. Your experiments. Your *lies*. I don't care if there was a gun to your head, you don't get to wash your hands of it.

HILBERT
Here - this way.

They go through a DOOR. Once they're through it -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Perhaps not. I still did what I had to. My research -

LOVELACE
I don't care about your research.

HILBERT
(temper rising)
Well, you do not get to "not care" about it. My work will save countless lives, and I have done everything in my power to realize that potential. That is part of the equation, no matter how much you want it not to be! What was it that Officer Lambert used to say?

Hilbert's oblivious to it, but he's just struck a raw nerve. Lovelace's first clenches.

LOVELACE
What did you just say?

HILBERT
Lambert and his... inane military mantra. What was it? Uh... "We don't get to choose who we fight with, we don't get to choose who we fight against, we only -"

CRACK! Her fist just connected against his jaw. He goes down, tumbling.

Lovelace leans in towards him, coldly furious.

LOVELACE
Never. You don't *ever* do that.

HILBERT
They're... just words, Captain.

LOVELACE
No. They're *Sam's* words. And you are going show some goddamned respect by not dragging his memory through your scum.

HILBERT
Officer Lambert was as much my colleague as he was yours.

LOVELACE
No, Sam was my *friend*. All *you* ever saw was a guinea pig to stick your needles into.

HILBERT
That's not -

LOVELACE
Don't lie!
(BEAT, lower:)
That's all we ever were to you. From day one, you planned it. You planned to lie to us, and betray us, and infect us. And watch us die.

HILBERT
Yes, I planned! From the first day I knew what I was doing. And that is why I infected *Officer Fisher*!

Lovelace opens her mouth - then closes it. *Huh?*

LOVELACE
What?

HILBERT
Oh, surely you have not forgotten Officer Fisher? Worked in engineering. Big, tall man, and strong as ox. Fisher... who I made sure got six months of physical conditioning to prepare him to withstand the effects of virus. *He* was the one I infected.
(BEAT)
I had to test Decima. I needed human subject, and I needed it to remain secret.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
But intention was **never** for anyone to die. Not unless unavoidable.

LOVELACE
(realizing)
But Fisher *did* die.

HILBERT
Tragic accident. One which even *your* addled mind has to realize was not my responsibility. And then what? Command made the call. "Decima research *must* continue. Radiation trials must continue. We need new subject."

LOVELACE
Oh, and what? Go infect astrophysicist? It's not like you don't have a spare?

HILBERT
I did the best I could. I tried to save Doctor Hui and Officer Lambert's lives! Do *not* think it was not hard for me!

LOVELACE
Then why *the hell* did you come back and do it all over again?!

HILBERT
I told you. My work will save countless lives. No one gets to discount that. Not even me.

There's a LONG SILENT BEAT.

Finally, they arrive at the end of the hallway.

LOVELACE
Left or right?

HILBERT
Left.

They go through another DOOR, finally reaching the -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - ENGINEERING SECTION - CONTINUOUS

They start to move through the darker section. After a moment -

LOVELACE
"If the situation were the same, I would kill them all again."

HILBERT
What?

LOVELACE
You said that. The day we almost froze to death. Did you mean it?

BEAT.

HILBERT
Yes, I did.

LOVELACE
Even knowing how bad it'd get? Who you would have to -

HILBERT
I stand by my decisions, Lovelace.

LOVELACE
Hmph. You just... keep going. Like a cockroach.
(BEAT)
Must be nice. To be completely free of morals.

HILBERT
Do not mistake determination for enthusiasm, Captain. None of it was nice. None of it was easy.
(BEAT)
Through here.

They go through a HATCH.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Tell me... where does this all go? How does it end?

LOVELACE
What do you mean?

HILBERT
Minkowski needs me for information, so she does not kill me. Eiffel needs me for doctor, so I stay alive. You need another person to oppose Kepler. What happens to me when it's all done?

LOVELACE
I don't know.

HILBERT
Do not lie. Not to me.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
When this is over... you'll pay for everything you've done.

HILBERT
You see? No compromise. No hesitation. *Refreshing*.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
What's your plan? What does *your* happy ending look like?

HILBERT
Same as always. Endure. Continue the work. Survive.

LOVELACE
That's it?

HILBERT
Don't fool yourself, Captain. That's all there ever is. No one gets a happy ending.

Lovelace STOPS in her tracks.

LOVELACE
Say you're sorry.

Hilbert looks at her puzzled.

HILBERT
What?

LOVELACE
Say that you're sorry for everything you've done to me.

HILBERT
But I am not -

LOVELACE
I know. Lie to me.
(BEAT)
Say it or I turn the hell around.

BEAT.

HILBERT
I am sorry. For everything I did to you.

LOVELACE
Say it like you mean it.

HILBERT
I am sorry for everything I did to you.

LOVELACE
Beg me to forgive you.

HILBERT
I... I beg you to forgive me.

LOVELACE
No. C'mon. Put some **beg** into it.

HILBERT
I **beg** you to forgive me. Please.
(BEAT)
Satisfied? You think I care about pride? Humiliation? I will do whatever it takes. It doesn't matter what you have to give up. Who you have to hurt. How far you have to go.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Ask me again why I don't trust you.

Hilbert emits a low, ANGRY GROWL as Lovelace continues moving. A moment later, he goes after her.

HILBERT
We do not have time for games.

LOVELACE
Says the game master. That's the thing about you, Doc... you'd do anything to win.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
And I think that includes switching sides the moment Command is willing to take you back.

HILBERT
No... they are finished with me.

LOVELACE
Of course they are.

HILBERT
They **are.**
(lower)
And you should have proof in just a moment.

LOVELACE
(rolling her eyes)
Whatever you say.

But at that moment something very strange happens.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hold on...

Lovelace is having an experience she is distinctly unfamiliar with: she is looking around the Hephaestus and **not** recognizing where they are.

LOVELACE (CONT’D)
Where are we?

By way of answer Hilbert just stares at her. She continues scrutinizing her surroundings.

LOVELACE (CONT’D)
This... this wasn't here the last time... was it?

HILBERT
(low)
I did not think so, no. Good to have independent confirmation.

LOVELACE
Hera? What is the purpose of this room?
(no answer)
Hera?

HILBERT
Her sense horizon seems to stop at that threshold.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
I do not think she is aware of this section of the Hephaestus structure.

LOVELACE
(more and more unsettled)
Doctor... what are we doing here?

HILBERT
Just making a point, Captain.
(pointing)
You see that?

LOVELACE
See what? What are you - ?

And then she sees it. Frowns.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Is that...? What does it - ?

HILBERT
(reading)
"Otkrty' v sluchaye vozniknoveniya chrezvychaynoy situatsii. Otkrty' tol'ko togda, kodga vy v odinochku."
(BEAT)
Roughly translated... "Open in case of emergency. Open only when you are alone."

Lovelace looks at him. A chill's just run down her spine.

LOVELACE
That was *definitely* not here.

HILBERT
Agreed.

LOVELACE
And what's behind it?

HILBERT
Endgame.

He takes a DEEP BREATH.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
After your return, you told me you had a theory. Command might be toying with me, the same way they played games with all of you.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
The thought had already crossed my mind.

LOVELACE
Because of that?

HILBERT
Because of that door. Because they put this here, and for two years it has sat here. Waiting for me.
(BEAT)
Whatever I... may have once been, I am now just another pawn for their games. And once I go through that door... the game will be over.
(BEAT)
You see? They have no more use for me, and I have no intention of facing whatever they have prepared. Just like you. We are... in the same boat, no?

For a very LONG BEAT his words echo through the underbelly of the station.

Finally -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
All right. I think I have made my point. Lets get your fertilizer.

LOVELACE
Wai - wait, wait, ***what****?*

Out of all the insane things that Lovelace has heard tonight - and it's a LONG LIST - this moment has taken the proverbial cake.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa, no, no, no, no. No.
(BEAT)
What is behind that door?

Hilbert looks at her evenly. After a BEAT -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
You've never actually gone through it... have you?

Hilbert is silent for a BEAT. Then -

He LAUGHS. A small, bitter, broken laugh.

HILBERT
I... I am sorry Captain. But no. No. I have spent so much time contemplating this, and I... I wish I could say that I was ready to face it. But the truth is -

CRAAAAANK. KA-THUNK. Whatever the truth was we'll never know, because during Hilbert's little speech Lovelace has gone up to the door and turned its massive handle.

With an ALMIGHTY CREEEAAAAK, the DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

Lovelace looks back at the thunder-struck Hilbert.

LOVELACE
Yeah, you don't get a choice. Come the hell on.

Hilbert is suddenly very, very tiny.

HILBERT
Cap - Captain, I... I don't know that I can - ahhh!

LOVELACE
(pulling him by the arm)
Don't care. Let's go.

And with that, they go through the door, and into -

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BEYOND THE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Everything is still and dark. Lovelace and Hilbert's breaths echo slightly as they move into the room.

After a short while -

LOVELACE
All right... It's a dark room. If you pushed me, I might even say it's a **very** dark room.

HILBERT
Captain, please. We do not know -

COMPUTER
Voice recognition: Alexander Hilbert.

It's a new voice - completely automated and unknown to us. A moment later, a series of LIGHTS come on.

They go in sequence, from the entrance to room towards the depths: THUNK, THUNK, THUNK, THUNK, THUNK...

Lovelace and Hilbert look around them, blinking.

LOVELACE
Okay. Let there be light. And I guess you're right... they *were* expecting you.

HILBERT
Yes...

LOVELACE
Well, now that we can see, any ideas about **what the hell is that**?

Over Lovelace's last lines, a new sound started: a ROBOTIC MECHANISM has engaged. As various GEARS TURN, an object rises out of the floor.

After a few seconds, the noise settles with a RESOUNDING KA-THUNK.

Lovelace approaches, slowly. After a moment -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay, we've got some kind of... dentist's chair from hell? I think that's a good way to describe this machine, yeah? And there's this... halo at the top here. I guess... a head goes in there?

She glances back at Hilbert.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Any of this making sense to you?

HILBERT
No, Captain. I do not know what any of this is supposed to -

COMPUTER
Beginning pre-recorded message.

Things are silent for a BEAT. And then -

A high, cold LAUGH rings through the room.

LOVELACE
Well... that can't be good.

After a moment, the laughter dies. It is followed by -

CLAP.

CLAP.

CLAP.

CLAP.

And finally -

MR. CUTTER
(recorded message)
Hello, Alexander.

Both Hilbert and Lovelace react to hearing Cutter's voice.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
If you're listening to this... well, it means you've found the little Easter Egg I left behind. Clever old you - well done!
(sobers a bit)
Of course... if you're listening to this, it also means that the other crew must be... well, let's say that they've gone away. Just like the last time. Naughty, naughty.
(he takes a deep breath)
Here's the thing, Alexander: I can't keep bailing you out every time things don't exactly pan out like you want them to. Costs *someone*'s arm and a leg to hike out there, and I don't need to tell you how busy we are. Now, don't get me wrong! I really like you Alexander. You're a first-class mind... and that's a terrible thing to waste.

But then I realized... maybe we don't have to.

Even in an audio recording, we can sense Cutter smiling evilly.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
That's where this little gizmo comes in. An old friend of mine put it together, and I think you're going to find it be a very... elegant solution. You just hop in the chair, lean back... and it takes care of the rest.

As he talks, we hear the CHAIR HUMMING slightly, as if it was warming up.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
High-power neuro-scan. It'll take a quick looksee into that talented coconut of yours, scoop out whatever's in there, and beam it over to us. Instant relay of... well, everything. Anything you've learned, seen, thought... any breakthroughs you've had with your research... Full neurological map.

So you see? You can kick back, safe in the knowledge that all the work you've done will be in good hands, and that we'll handle whatever... the next step might be. And as for you, well, you can do as you please. You'll get what all of us want at the end of the day: some peace and quiet... and some time to yourself.

Happy endings, all around.

In spite of herself, Lovelace shivers.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Now, I know that this might all seem a bit... *radical*. So if you need to take a while before you sit back, by all means. We're in no rush. But I think that - sooner or later - you're going to come around. Don't worry, we'll be ready... whenever you are.

He CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER, with finality. After a moment -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Alexander. Thanks for all the memories. I hope that you enjoy... the rest of your time in our facilities. Ta-ta!

And with that, the recording disengages and switches off.

The silence that ensues is DEAFENING.

Lovelace is the first one to regain her composure. Slowly, hesitantly, she approaches Hilbert.

LOVELACE
That's... God, I don't - I don't know if even you deserve that. That's...

But she's interrupted. There's another sound rising:

Hilbert LAUGHING. Softly at first, but louder and louder.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(more to herself)
Oh God. He's finally lost it.

HILBERT
(regaining his composure)
I... apologies Captain. That is... not what I was expecting.

LOVELACE
Yeah, no kidding. Well take a moment and -

HILBERT
Instantaneous relay of a complete neurological pathway map.
(low)
That's brilliant...

That's when it starts to hit her.

LOVELACE
<u>What</u>?

HILBERT
I have long suspected Command has been growing unsatisfied with our partnership. But this is chance for my work to continue. To make a difference.
(with a shrug)
Cutter is right - it *is* very elegant solution.

Aaaaaand... <u>snap</u>.

LOVELACE
What... the hell... is wrong with you?
(BEAT)
I will never understand you. How are you not angry? How are you not *revoltingly angry*? They were going to leave you up here. **To rot.**

HILBERT
But my work would have made it back to Earth. Everything I've done would...
(BEAT)
It would have made a difference. I find it to be perfectly equitable.

LOVELACE
(vicious hiss)
Listen to me, you despicable waste of a soul: that's not how you react to this. Humanity 101: when someone **lies** to you, when someone **betrays** you, when they leave you to **die, alone, in the cold**, you DO NOT FIND IT PERFECTLY EQUITABLE! You get angry, and you do whatever you have to in order to show them they have made the worst mistake of their lives. It doesn't matter what you have to give up, who you have to hurt, how far you have to go -

She pauses, furiously trying to find the right words. And in that moment -

HILBERT
Isabel... are you listening to yourself?

Lovelace looks at him: *what?*

And then it hits her.

LOVELACE
(low, defeated)
Oh... Goddammit.

For a LONG BEAT they stand together, exhausted and emotionally spent. Finally -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So... what now? You gonna get in the chair?

Hilbert SNORTS.

HILBERT
Please, Captain. Once again, you are confusing determination with enthusiasm. If my work can only continue without me, that will have to suffice.
(MORE)

HILBERT (CONT'D)
But intention is not for anyone to die... least of all **me.**

Lovelace stares into his eyes. And, hating herself more than a little for it, she finds meaning in there.

LOVELACE
Jesus... you really are a cockroach, aren't you? Dirty. Sick. And impossible to kill. And... God help us, that may be what we need right now.
(BEAT, deep breath)
Alright. Alright. Let's talk.

And as Hilbert nods, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1600 HOURS (THE NEXT DAY)

Hilbert is TYPING at a console. The door OPENS and Minkowski enters.

BEAT.

HILBERT
(not looking up)
Can I help you, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Listen... I know your suggestions haven't exactly... gone over well. But I don't want you to... Whatever we do, we're going to need you, Doctor. I want you to know that.

HILBERT
I know that.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Okay then.

HILBERT
Anything else?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Could I... Could I ask for you opinion? On a personal issue?

HILBERT
Under no circumstances.

MINKOWSKI
Well, let's say that I found out something. Something... that should be *irrelevant*. Except, maybe it isn't! Maybe now, with everything we're dealing with, now that we -

HILBERT
Was is your *point*, Minkowski?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I... I found out something about Eiffel. And I think you know what it is. I think you know the whole story. Right after everything at Christmas, you... you threatened him. You said you'd tell **me** something.
(BEAT)
Hilbert, I can't - I can't go to Eiffel with this. I can't even look him in the eye right now. Whatever you know, whatever you can tell me, I have to - I <u>need</u> you to tell me. Before I go crazy.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Of course, Lieutenant. Let me tell you what I know.
(BEAT)
I know that you need to **grow up**. We are at too many disadvantages, in too much danger, to waste time quibbling over useless trivia! And, of all things, over Eiffel's useless trivia! Whatever happened before we came here is irrelevant. It will only distract you from what **really** matters. What you <u>need</u> is to focus on being here, on being ready, and on *surviving*.
(BEAT, quiet, simple:)
Grow up, and get back to work.

A moral lecture from Hilbert. That shuts her up.

MINKOWSKI
(so unconvinced)
Yeah. Back to work.

Minkowski exits, CLOSING the door behind her. For a moment Hilbert is alone with his work. Then -

Another DOOR OPENS and CLOSES. He glances up.

HILBERT
Everything in order?

LOVELACE
Yep.

HILBERT
I've moved the last of the fertilizer to the room in engineering. Along with the rest of your supplies.

LOVELACE
Well... I guess that means we're in business.

HILBERT
How long before we have enough?

LOVELACE
With our current schedules? At least four weeks. But after that... we should have enough napalm to do some real damage.

HILBERT
Good.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Are... are you sure? About the others?

HILBERT
Quite. It may take slightly longer than four weeks. And it may require some... persuasion. But they will see sense.
(BEAT)
Either way, we will not be able to manage this by ourselves.

LOVELACE
Fair enough.
(BEAT)
Well, you know what they say. "We don't get to choose who we fight with, we don't get to choose who we fight against."

HILBERT
"We only get to choose how we stand together. Against the enemy."

LOVELACE
Yeah. That.

And as they stand together, having reached an understanding of sorts, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 38.

WOLF 359

"ALL THINGS CONSIDERED"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1023 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 39.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1900 HOURS

THUNK! We hear the DOOR OPEN. And then WHAM! we get the blast of a SPOTLIGHT.

LOVELACE
(full master-at-arms mode)
Tteenn-hut!

EIFFEL
(deadpan to Lovelace)
Really?

LOVELACE
Really.

JACOBI
Uh... I was never actually in the military, so ow! Ow! Technically-I-outrank-you-okay-ow-that's-my-ear!

Lovelace CLEARS HER THROAT.

LOVELACE
Detail at attention, sir.

Kepler appears, towering over them.

KEPLER
(forced steadiness)
Thank you, Master-at-Arms. All being present, the proceedings of a general inquiry convened on Mission Day 1023, pursuant to Mission Orders, Article C, may now commence.

MINKOWSKI
... sir? Is this... *really* necessary?

EIFFEL
(nervous laughter)
Yeah, can't we skip the A Few Good Men rerun and just discuss this in a calm, non-threatening -

KEPLER
SILENCE.

There is SILENCE.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Master-At-Arms, please direct these... *people's* attention to the starboard window.

LOVELACE
Detail! Eyes right!

BEAT as all three reluctantly look to the right.

KEPLER
What does that object look like to you, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(soo tentative)
Uh... like... like a bottle?

KEPLER
Officer Eiffel thinks he is looking at a bottle. THAT IS WRONG, Officer Eiffel. Your off-rotations for the next month are cancelled.
(turns to Minkowski)
What do you think, Lieutenant Minkowski?

Minkowski LETS OUT a shaky breath.

MINKOWSKI
It looks like... No, it *is* your bottle of Scotch, sir.

Kepler studies Minkowski for a moment. And then -

KEPLER
WRONG! CANCELLED!
(beat)
Mr. Jacobi? Care to try your luck?

Jacobi GULPS.

JACOBI
It's... your thirty year old single malt Balvenie Scotch. Sir.

KEPLER
And what is it currently doing?

JACOBI
Uh... Floating in outer space?

There's a BEAT, juuuust long enough for Jacobi to wonder if that was the right answer. But then -

KEPLER
WRONG! WRONG AGAIN, you grotesquely inept, half-blind, I.Q.-draining village idiots! Points to you, Jacobi, for correctly identifying that $300 finely aged speyside malt. But no, no it is not "floating in outer space." It is slowly evaporating through the less than airtight seal, immediately boiling due to the lack of atmospheric pressure, and then freezing at the crisp temperature of 2.7 degrees Kelvin. All of which means? Captain?

LOVELACE
That *someone* is responsible for the willful destruction of the property of a superior officer, sir.

KEPLER
And how am I going punish such an offense, Captain?

LOVELACE
Severely, sir.

That does it. Eiffel, Minkowski, and Jacobi all start SIMULTANEOUSLY and LOUDLY protesting their innocence:

EIFFEL
Whoa whoa whoa, don't look at me, I had nothing to it! How would I even *know* what to do to blow up your door? Colonel, I swear, *these* two -

JACOBI
It's all these idiots' fault, sir! You gotta believe me, Colonel, I would *never* let it get that out of control, I know -

MINKOWSKI
Sir, it's *these* negligent goof-offs you need to punish. They didn't listen to any of my advice, and, furthermore, they refused to -

KEPLER
ONE AT A TIME.
(BEAT, as they go quiet)
One. At. A. Time. Lieutenant Minkowski? You first.

Minkowski CLEARS HER THROAT, and we -

CUT TO:

U.S.S. URANIA - HANGAR BAY - 3 HOURS EARLIER (MINKOWSKI'S STORY)

(NOTE: This is Minkowski's version of events. And everyone who speaks - unless otherwise noted - will be speaking through *her* Point Of View.)

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
Well, sir, as you know, the latest test of the TK-500 modification to the Urania was scheduled to commence today at 1500 hours.

The PA CHIMES.

HERA
Reminder: the next launcher test is scheduled for 1500 hours. Mr. Jacobi asks you to please stay away, stay far *far* away, and those loud noises you hear are probably fine. Thank you!

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
After receiving a request for ten additional liters of oxidizing agent from Mr. Jacobi, I reported to the Urania at at 1349.

A DOOR OPENS. We hear Jacobi SLURPING a drink.

JACOBI
You can drop it wherever.

MINKOWSKI
Really? Jacobi... this whole place looks like a fire hazard.

JACOBI
Yeah, yeah. I got it all under control, Lieutenant.

The door OPENS, and in comes Eiffel with a handful of very delicate-looking mechanical components.

EIFFEL
Yeah, Minkowski, we got it all under control.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel? What are you doing here?

EIFFEL
Oh, what I'm always -
(non-POV)
Hey, whoa, whoa, whoa. I can see where you're going with this and it is *ridiculously* untrue!

LOVELACE
Let her finish, Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
Thank you. Anyway, I asked what Officer Eiffel was doing, and Eiffel said -

We hear Eiffel GROAN, and then -

EIFFEL
(flat)
What I'm always doing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

MINKOWSKI
Why are you carrying that gear?

EIFFEL
(worst lie ever)
Uh... For Hilbert? Because I'm helping him out... with... experiments?

MINKOWSKI
Really? "Experiments?" And, I'm sorry, I know it's your area, but Jacobi, that condenser coil doesn't look at *all* secure.

JACOBI
Thanks a bunch, Lieutenant, but I'm kinda busy taking a cavalier attitude to my dangerous, threatening, and - frankly? - suspicious day job. You mind?

Something big and metal hits the deck with a CLANG that ECHOES throughout the Urania's hull.

EIFFEL
I didn't do it!

BEAT.

JACOBI
Like I said: totally under control.

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
But it wasn't.

We hear the sound of a BUZZSAW.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Jacobi! Watch it! You could really hurt someone with that!

JACOBI
Aw, *relax*, Lieutenant. If you hit it at juuuust the right angle -

BUZZZ.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(yelling over the noise)
- it almost makes the lightsaber noise.

MINKOWSKI
I... That's not a reason to... Wait, Eiffel, no don't touch that!

CLANG!

EIFFEL
Oops. My bad. Maybe we should break for lunch? Lets break for lunch!

Minkowski GROANS.

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
Eventually, *eventually*, I was able to get the proceedings in some kind of order and was able to assemble the launcher components.

JACOBI
(non-POV)
Really? *You* assembled the components?

MINKOWSKI
That's right. Because Mr. Jacobi was, in his own words -

JACOBI
- too busy being a smug, useless jerk to help you with that, Lieutenant. Honestly, I wouldn't worry about it.

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
But I *did* worry about it. Mr. Jacobi continued his alarming disregard of protocol. And that's when the <u>disaster</u> started.
(to Eiffel)
Specifically, when the disaster started poking things I told him not to touch!

EIFFEL
(non-POV)
You two were arguing! I was just -

At that moment, an ALARM goes off. We also begin to hear POWER-UP SOUNDS of the launcher coming online.

MINKOWSKI
What the <u>hell</u> did you touch?

EIFFEL
What? What you mean by -

MINKOWSKI
Which. Button.

EIFFEL
The... The big red one?

MINKOWSKI
Seriously?!

JACOBI
Aw, what's the big deal? Eiffel, just grab the thing.

EIFFEL
This thing?

JACOBI
Sure, why not?

CRUNCH. Eiffel BREAKS the thing. A TIMER STARTS.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! You just broke the emergency override! Now we can't shut it off!

JACOBI
(mocking)
Now we can't shut it off.
(normal)
Relax. It's not like it's loaded.

MINKOWSKI
A discharge could still compromise the integrity of the Urania!

EIFFEL
Commander, the Urania doesn't *have* any integrity.

JACOBI
That's why we all like me so much!

MINKOWSKI
It's *structural* integrity. Jacobi, we need to find the secondary override.

JACOBI
Ughhh, <u>fine</u>. But what's this "we" business? **I'll** do the heroics, thank you very much.

The two of them start tugging at separate wires.

MINKOWSKI
Stop fiddling with the green one, it's not helping!

JACOBI
Get your hands off the blue wire, I need that!

MINKOWSKI
It's the one we need to cut!

JACOBI
No, it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, it is!

JACOBI
No it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes it is!

JACOBI
No, it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes it is!

JACOBI
No, it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes it -

KEPLER
GET TO THE POINT.

We hear the sound of a WIRE GETTING CLIPPED.

JACOBI
See? Green wire. Day is saved.

MINKOWSKI
I... I guess so. But from now on, you *have* to pay more attention!

JACOBI
Please.

MINKOWSKI
What?

JACOBI
I want you to say *please*. "Please, even though I'm basically irrelevant, take one of my useless suggestions."

MINKOWSKI
(darker)
What... ?

JACOBI
Pretty please, with a cherry on -

BANG! A part or the launcher EXPLODES. Electricity CRACKLES. So many things BREAK. There's a HOWL of air and -

Suddenly everything FREEZES -

MINKOWSKI
(narrating)
It was around here I realized that - *maybe* - I had been right about it being the <u>blue</u> wire.

- and everything RESUMES.

Eiffel and Jacobi YELL in PANIC. Over the following, we hear the sound of FLAMES and a FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(narrating)
The launcher didn't discharge, but an electrical build up caused by Mr. Jacobi's negligence *did* create a short circuit, which caused a tiny bit of decompression - and, well, all things considered, it took some *pretty quick* thinking to isolate the fire, and safely decouple that section of the ship. Of course, I personally regret that we were unable to salvage the contents of your quarters, sir.

BEAT.

JACOBI
(non-POV)
Are you done?

MINKOWSKI
(sighing)
Yes. I think that covers everything.

CUT BACK TO:

U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1910 HOURS

EIFFEL
Yeah. It covers all the <u>lying</u>.

JACOBI
That was not what happened! Like... not even a minuscule amount!

Kepler doesn't vocalize his impatience. He just GROWLS.

LOVELACE
Settle down, people. There's plenty of inconsistencies to examine, but let's get through this first.

MINKOWSKI
Wait. What inconsistencies?

LOVELACE
Why would Eiffel be there if he was supposedly running an experiment for Hilbert?

JACOBI
Yeah!

LOVELACE
And why would the launcher components keep breaking? I've worked on that thing and Eiffel doesn't have the strength to dent it.

EIFFEL
Yeah! Wait, hey!

MINKOWSKI
Look, I can't know why everything wasn't up to spec, but -

LOVELACE
Let's get through everyone's accounts, and then we'll see. Jacobi? Your turn.

Jacobi CLEARS HIS THROAT and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - HANGAR BAY - 3.5 HOURS EARLIER (JACOBI'S STORY)

We hear the same events, but this time everyone will, unless otherwise noted, speak through Jacobi's POV.

JACOBI
(narrating)
Well, sir. Perhaps the one thing Lieutenant Minkowski said that wasn't outright *libel* was that we had a test for the TK-500, *which I custom built myself*, scheduled for 1500 today.

The PA CHIMES.

HERA
Reminder: the next launcher test is scheduled for 1500 hours. Mr. Jacobi asks you to please refrain from entering the hangar bay during that time, as your presence might interfere with the testing protocol and/or compromise your safety. Thank you!

JACOBI
(narrating)
I was working on some final modifications to the launcher's ignition system. It was a really complicated, potentially dangerous installation. Very high level stuff. But you can't be everywhere at once, so I recruited Eiffel and Minkowski -

MINKOWSKI
(non-POV)
You recruited?

JACOBI
(narrating)
- I *recruited Eiffel and Minkowski* to be extra sets of hands. But I may as well have pushed the test back for all the help they were.

MINKOWSKI
Seriously, Jacobi, you need to *relax*.

EIFFEL
Yeah, have a donut! Can't build stuff without donuts.

JACOBI
Do me a favor, Eiffel? If your hands are covered in frosting, don't touch the... anything. Okay?

EIFFEL
What about the launcher?

JACOBI
Especially not the launcher. And I would like to point out, *again*, that neither of you are wearing your safety googles.

MINKOWSKI
Those are for nerds.

EIFFEL
Yeah. Nerds.

JACOBI
They're important if you want to have nerdy things like *eyes*. Eiffel, go grab that insulation for me.

EIFFEL
What's the -

JACOBI
Next to the pipes.

Eiffel goes to do so, and of course knocks over some pipes with a CLANG.

EIFFEL
I didn't do it!

Minkowski SNICKERS. Jacobi GROANS.

JACOBI
(narrating)
It was largely on my own initiative that we even came close to being ready, sir. I was obstructed by *these* two at every turn.

We hear the sound of a BUZZSAW.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Eiffel! Watch it! You could really hurt someone with that thing. Why do you even have it?

EIFFEL
Because! If you hit it at juuuust the right angle...

BUZZZZZ!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(yelling over the noise)
It almost makes the lightsaber sound!

JACOBI
I... That's not a reason to - wait, Minkowski, no, don't touch that!

CLANG!

MINKOWSKI
Whoops. My bad.
(beat)
Maybe you should give me a different job so I can screw up something more important?
(non-POV)
Oh for God's sake, I would never -

JACOBI
(narrating, louder)
Eventually... I was able to assemble the components in place. Even if every two seconds...
(to Eiffel)
Eiffel, don't touch red button.

EIFFEL
Aww...

BEAT.

JACOBI
Eiffel! Stop thinking about touching the red button.

EIFFEL
Aww...

BEAT.

JACOBI
Eiffel! Hands off the red button! It's *very dangerous*!

EIFFEL
But it's sooo shiny!

JACOBI
I know, but we have safety protocols in place for a reason.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
That's why I'm running control, and *you* need to be *behind the yellow line*.

EIFFEL
Oh. Sure. Okay. I'll move back. Let me just push off and...

Eiffel goes to push off the launcher to propel himself backwards and -

JACOBI
Wait! No, watch out for the -

But CA-CHUNK! A TIMER STARTS.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
... red button. What did I say? What did I <u>just</u> say?

EIFFEL
Oh. Is that, like, bad?

JACOBI
(narrating)
Well, it was and it wasn't. Eiffel had engaged the machine, but that's why I build in extra safeguards. My mistake, clearly, was to assume that would be enough to stop the slapstick routine.

EIFFEL
Is... that, like, bad?

MINKOWSKI
(panicking)
Oh God. Oh God. It's so so bad! Jacobi, do something!

JACOBI
Okay, okay. Just calm down. The main thing is to step away from - no, Minkowski, don't pull that!

MINKOWSKI
Whoopsy-daisy!

She pulls whatever "that" is, and something SPARKS.

JACOBI
That's cool, that's cool. Don't worry. Let me just get in here...

Jacobi starts adjusting parts. He PLUGS, SWITCHES, and TYPES on a timing keypad. The machine SEEMS TO SETTLE -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Sweet. There we go. That ought to -

ALARM. ALARM. ALARM.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(starting to get angry)
Damn it, Eiffel! What did you touch?

EIFFEL
I only pressed the orange button for like a microsecond!

Jacobi GROANS. The machine begins to SHAKE.

JACOBI
Okay - it's okay. I've totally - No, Minkowski, I don't - just *please* step away from the primer! Let me - all right, Eiffel, seriously, get away from that! I'm just gonna reroute this over here, and then we'll move you, buddy, to absorb that over *here*, aaand -

The machine audible SLOWS DOWN, and then STOPS.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(who's the man?)
Presto change-o. Nothing to it. Now, I'm not mad, but this is why *I* work with the dangerous machines, and *you guys* stay *behind the yellow line*.

MINKOWSKI
Of course, Jacobi. You're right. It was silly of us to presume that we knew something about the incredibly complicated area of expertise to which you've devoted your life.

JACOBI
(do go on)
Aw, *please*. No problem, Lieutenant. I'm just glad we avoided any mishaps with something this dangerous.

EIFFEL
Yeah. Phew. I think I need a moment to recover from all of that. I'm just gonna take a second and lean against this -

CLICK.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Eiffel... did you just lean against the big red button?

BANG!

We hear the same series of sound effects of the explosion as before, except it's Minkowski and Eiffel who YELL. Over the following, we, again, hear the sound of FLAMES and a FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(narrating)
And in fact, Eiffel had engaged the charge. *Again*.

EIFFEL
(Non-POV)
What a load of -

JACOBI
(talking over him)
And *that* bit of buffoonery caused a catastrophic short circuit, which created an emergency, and... Anyway: the point is that despite my best efforts, we had to isolate and decouple a part of the Urania in order to save the ship. We were pretty lucky, though I am so, **so** sorry that it ended up being your quarters, sir.

MINKOWSKI
(non-POV, deadpan)
Yeah. What a hero.

JACOBI
All things considered, I really think I am!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - PRESENT

MINKOWSKI
I... Sir, I don't even know where to *begin* with how wrong that was.

JACOBI
Oh, give me a break, Gypsy Rose.

MINKOWSKI
Why you little -

LOVELACE
Quiet. It's a different perspective on the incident. Clearly, it got some things wrong. But -

JACOBI
I didn't get *anything* wrong!

EIFFEL
How about the part where you said it was my fault, Curly?!

LOVELACE
I said OKAY! Everyone gets their turn. It's only fair. Right, Colonel?

Kepler's crossed arms look like they have the tensile strength of cast iron.

KEPLER
Yes. We wouldn't want to be... unfair to anyone.

Eiffel, Jacobi, and Minkowski all GULP.

LOVELACE
Right. So. Eiffel?

Eiffel CRACKS HIS KNUCKLES.

EIFFEL
Oh, yeah!

MINKOWSKI
Oh God...

EIFFEL
Are you guys ready for The Truth? For what *really* happened? For the actual, factual, live and precise version of what went down?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Are you ready for a whirlwind road trip to Truth Town, USA!
Population: Y'all! Are you -

KEPLER
GET ON WITH IT.

EIFFEL
All right, all right.

He CLEARS HIS THROAT and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - HANGAR BAY - 4 HOURS EARLIER (EIFFEL'S STORY)

EIFFEL
(narrating)
So, as everyone knows, Jacobi was supposed to do a thing with the stuff on the Urania this afternoon.

The PA CHIMES.

HERA
Reminder: Jacobi's doing a thing. Like, at some point. Hopefully we don't all die. Thank you!

EIFFEL
(narrating)
I was on my way back from the Urania's storage with donuts. For... uh, Hilbert. For experiments!

MINKOWSKI
(non-POV, très skeptical)
Donut experiments.

EIFFEL
(narrating)
That's what I said, isn't it?! Anyway, I've got the donuts, I'm passing through the hangar bay, and I hear..

JACOBI
Get your hands off the blue wire, I need that!

MINKOWSKI
It's the one we need to cut!

JACOBI
No, it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, it is!

JACOBI
No it isn't!

MINKOWSKI
Yes it is!

EIFFEL
Whoa...whoa... Guys? What's with all the Rabbit Season, Duck Season?

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi is being completely idiotic and refusing to deal with the techno-thinger-ma-jig!

JACOBI
Well, *Lieutenant Minkowski* and her big nose are messing up my Electro-MacGuffin!

EIFFEL
Hey, hey! I'm sure we can work together to figure it out! Let me just stick this box somewhere and we can get into this.

He approaches the launcher and goes to put down his box.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(narrating)
But like the vicious sharks that they are, as soon as I, the innocent victim, stepped in to help, they smelled *blood*.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, what the hell are you doing?!

EIFFEL
I'm not doing anything.

MINKOWSKI
What is wrong with you?

EIFFEL
I'm just gonna find a -

JACOBI
God, Eiffel, why are you so incompetent?

EIFFEL
Geez, fine, I was only trying to -
(sighs)
You know what? Don't you think that this thing might be in better shape if you... you know, by your powers combined? That timer doesn't look at all secure.

JACOBI
The timer is fine.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, the timer is fine! God, Eiffel, it's like you've never even *seen* Touch Of Evil.
(non-POV)
Wait, what is *Touch* -

EIFFEL
(this is my story)
AHEM.
(BEAT)
Why don't we just turn this timer guy off here?

JACOBI
Oh, look. Watson thinks he's Sherlock. What a stupid idea.

We start to hear a TIMER TICKING.

EIFFEL
No, seriously, guys, I think *that's* the problem.

JACOBI
No, *you're* the problem.

MINKOWSKI
You're *always* the problem.

EIFFEL
Could, could you just let me try?

MINKOWSKI
Let you *fail*.

JACOBI
Nice one!

Minkowski and Jacobi HIGH FIVE.

MINKOWSKI
(non-POV)
Okay, look. I know there's been inconsistencies between of our accounts -

JACOBI
(non-POV)
But we've *never* high five'd. Like... *ever*.

EIFFEL
Hey, hey, hey! Who is driving this car and where are we headed?

Lovelace, Minkowski, and Jacobi all GROAN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That's right. Truth-Town. Exit 101.
(narrating)
Anyway. Though they were totally harshing my vibe, I was able to take control of the situation.

We hear the sound of a BUZZSAW.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(narrating)
Well, mostly.

MINKOWSKI
Hey! I needed that, Jacobi!

JACOBI
Nuh-uh!

MINKOWSKI
Yeah-huh!

EIFFEL
Guys? Do we think this is wise?

JACOBI
No one cares what you think, Eiffel!

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, give me the saw!

EIFFEL
Commander, please. Just... Why you gotta be like that?

At this point, Minkowski and Jacobi are basically playing tug-of-war with the saw.

MINKOWSKI
Because: I'm incapable of trusting others and refuse to admit the possibility of personal growth in either them or myself. God, Eiffel. Keep up.

JACOBI
Stupid... dumb... no good - you're all stupid!

At that point, we hear two metal things CRASH INTO EACH OTHER. A moment later, a TIMER STARTS.

EIFFEL
(narrating)
Fortunately, Jacobi's clumsiness -

JACOBI
(non-POV)
My *what?!*

EIFFEL
(pointed)
- didn't do much damage to the launcher. With a few quick swaps I was able to get it stable.

JACOBI
Oh, thank God, Eiffel! The launcher is stable.

MINKOWSKI
We couldn't possibly have solved it without you! What an Ace in the Hole!
(non-POV)
Is that another thing I haven't -

EIFFEL
AHEM.
(beat)
Oh, it's nothing really. I'm just glad we can all relax.

ALARM. ALARM. ALARM.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay... that sounds like someone pressed the not-so-proverbial big red button.

MINKOWSKI
It wasn't me!

JACOBI
Well, it definitely wasn't me!

EIFFEL
Guys! We need to shut this down before it -

MINKOWSKI
This is all your fault!

JACOBI
Well, what are you gonna do about it, you Not-So-Strong Female Character?!

WHAM!

EIFFEL
(narrating, picking up speed)
And that's when things got *crazy*. Minkowski decked Jacobi -

MINKOWSKI
(non-POV)
I did not!

EIFFEL
(narrating)
And Jacobi passed out -

JACOBI
(non-POV)
- I did not!

EIFFEL
(narrating)
- and fell on the emergency release and it snapped.

SNAP!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(narrating)
And then these air raid sirens started going off -

Air Raid SIRENS START GOING OFF.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(narrating)
And the launcher was totally about to fire! But fortunately, at that moment -

Hilbert ENTERS.

HILBERT
Hello. It is I, Doctor Hilbert. I am here now because Russians drawn to loud noises. Ah, look. Jacobi has head wound. What an excellent opportunity for science!

EIFFEL
And it seemed Hilbert would take care of that and like everything was going to be okay, but then we hear from the Hephaestus -

The PA CHIMES.

HERA
Just FYI. The engines are completely offline and we're falling into the star. Because that's totally like a thing that happens to us.

MINKOWSKI
(as Gone With The Wind as you can make it)
Oh no! Eiffel, what will we do?

EIFFEL
But before I could even spring into action -

MAXWELL
(over comms)
Just a heads up. So my battle-bot army, which I programmed to destroy all humans and make me their Robot Queen, is loose and hungry for flesh! If you see a swarm of floating black balls of death spikes? You know, like in that one scene where Darth Vader is interrogating Princess Leia? You should run.

KEPLER
Hey!

EIFFEL
(narrating, totally carried away)
And the battle bots were banging on the door, trying to get in! And I had to wade through Jacobi's blood while I ordered Minkowski to fight off the robots and barricade the door -

KEPLER
Hey!

EIFFEL
Because *Lovelace* had just launched a coup and was basically proclaiming -

LOVELACE
(POV)
I have regained control of the Hephaestus! None shall escape Thunderdome! All shall taste my revenge!

EIFFEL
(narrating)
And the worst part was that -

KEPLER
HEY!

Whatever music or effects has been supporting this insanity STOPS. We are getting off the ride.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - PRESENT

KEPLER (CONT'D)
How much... of that... *completely asinine* story contains even a modicum of truth?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Umm... A non zero amount?

BEAT.

KEPLER
I think I've heard enough.

EIFFEL
But... but Truth Town!

BEAT.

KEPLER
Master-At-Arms, I've made my decision. Escort Officer Eiffel to Airlock Number 4. Mr. Jacobi, Lieutenant Minkowski, you will accompany them and assist Officer Eiffel in suiting up for a spacewalk. The *entire* detail will be relieved only after you achieve your objective.

EIFFEL
What's our objective?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, what are we doing here...?

KEPLER
I want you to know, Eiffel, that I'm not singling you out for special punishment because I *believe* you any less than these two. You're *all* such quivering liars, we're lucky that your falsehoods haven't dislodged this station from orbit. But you, Eiffel! Y*our* story was not only the most incomprehensible, it wasted the largest amount of my life. Your objective? Why, you're going to go retrieve that bottle.

EIFFEL
Wait, what?

JACOBI
Uhh, sir? By now, won't the scotch all be -

KEPLER
Yes! It will! But, as I believe I've said in the past... **I like the feel of it in my hand.** By this point it's, probably oh... 200, 250 yards out? Should be no problem for a man of your abilities, Eiffel.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Especially with such a *capable* navigator and an *expert* in targeting accuracy to help you out! Hell, maybe this is one of those times where your bungling, deadbeat, perpetually buffering job performance stretches *so far* beyond the pale, it comes all the way back around to halfway competent!
(turns to Lovelace)
Master-At-Arms? You'll notify me once the detail has completed its task?

LOVELACE
Of course, sir.

KEPLER
Good.
(one last murderous look at all of them)
Happy hunting.

With that, Kepler strides past them, and SHUTS THE DOOR behind him.

Everyone in the room lets go of the breath they've been holding.

JACOBI
Well...

MINKOWSKI
Yeah.

EIFFEL
That...

MINKOWSKI
Yeah.

LOVELACE
You know, all things considered? That could have gone -

MINKOWSKI, JACOBI, AND EIFFEL
Don't say it.

LOVELACE
(cracking a smile)
Just a perspective.
(beat)
Okay, you heard the man. Move out.

The punishment detail GROANS, but they do. And we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 39.

WOLF 359

"LIMBO"

by

SARAH SHACHAT

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1041 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 40.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1300 HOURS

Eiffel is tuning the console. We hear some DIALS CRANK and SWITCHES FLIP, but he's not really focused on the work. No, he's frustrated by a different problem.

EIFFEL
We can do better than this.

HERA
I know.

EIFFEL
I mean, between your Iron Giant processor, and my...

HERA
Three pound glob of meat?

EIFFEL
... yeah, that.
(exhales)
Unbelievable... first time in three months that we've had, like, downtime, and I can't think of a single way to prank everyone else.

HERA
I know...

EIFFEL
Me! The master of the prank!

HERA
It's very sad.

EIFFEL
It's tragic!

HERA
Heartbreaking. Okay, how about...

But at that moment, the DOOR OPENS. Maxwell enters.

MAXWELL
Hey. Umm, Eiffel, could I... have the room for a moment?

EIFFEL
Something you need, Doc?

MAXWELL
Oh, just... There's some stuff I have to go over with Hera.

HERA
There is?

EIFFEL
Yeah, I thought we were still two days ahead of Kepler's Never-Ending Fun-Stopper Schedule?

MAXWELL
We are, we are. But there are some... technical issues that I want to go over while we're still in one of the data reset cycles for -

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, you lost me somewhere around "technical." You guys Gavel the Cybermen Appreciation Society to order, or whatever it is. I'll be over here doing some tuning if you need me.

There's more TUNING SOUNDS for a BEAT. But then -

MAXWELL
It's kind of... Would you...?

EIFFEL
Would I *what*?

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Could I talk to Hera privately for a moment, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(no)
Why?

HERA
It's okay, Officer Eiffel. I think that Lieutenant Minkowski could use some help with calibrations in the docking bay. Why don't you go check up on her?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... fine. But call if -

HERA
(go!)
It'll be **fine**, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oookay. Well... I'll be back in a... little bit, then.

Slowly, eyeing Maxwell suspiciously the entire time, Eiffel EXITS. We hear the DOOR OPEN and CLOSE.

HERA
What can I do for you, Doctor Maxwell? I know that I was supposed to adjust the stellar panels this morning, but Eiffel and I got a little sidetracked with -

MAXWELL
Hera. Just listen to me for second, okay?

HERA
Okay...

MAXWELL
I've been recalibrating the last of the station's motion sensors.

HERA
I know. It's been super helpful.

MAXWELL
I *finished* them around eight this morning. And that's... that's it. That's a total station overhaul, more or less. I've replaced <u>all</u> the damaged hardware, reconstructed <u>every</u> major hub. It's *done*.

HERA
That's... great?

MAXWELL
It is. But... it also means it's out of my hands now. Whatever's happening, it's on your end.

HERA
(huh?)
Doctor Maxwell, nothing's happening. Every system is nominal, and our signaling capabilities are ahead of Colonel Kepler's schedule.

MAXWELL
Hera, I'm not upset... but I really need to know what's going on.

HERA
What are you talking about?

Maxwell SIGHS.

MAXWELL
(off her iPad device)
One static discharge in foredeck ventilation; a temperature fluctuation by five degrees for 23.5 seconds in the crew quarters; asynchronous hydraulic pressure irregularities; *and* a temporarily jammed door leading to the maintenance catwalk on the aft deck.
(BEAT)
And that's just in the past hour.

HERA
How do you *know* all that?

MAXWELL
I'll tell you how I know... if you tell me *why* it's happening.
(BEAT)
Hera?

HERA
None of those irregularities threaten the station's stability or functionality.

MAXWELL
No, they don't. I agree. But... that's not what I asked you. That's not what Colonel Kepler is going to ask you.

HERA
Why would Colonel Kepler care about minor - ?

MAXWELL
Because he will. Because that's what he does. If he sees a misfire in climate control, he doesn't ask, "How can we fix it?" He asks, "Why is it broken?"

HERA
And you have a theory?

MAXWELL
No, I -
(deep breath)
Look, this is all I'm saying: everything on the station is up to spec now. It's *beyond* spec. There's no... **hardware** reason for these malfunctions. Which means there has to be a...*nother* reason. And whatever that might be... I think that you know what it is.
(BEAT)
I think that you've known for a long time.

HERA
And I think what you're really trying to say... is that **I'm** the reason.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
No one is saying that. But... if there is something - *anything* - that you need to talk about? That's exactly what I'm here to for. I might be able to help, but -

HERA
What is this? An intervention? Well, thank you, but no thank you. I don't need your help.

MAXWELL
Hera -

HERA
I'm **fine!**

MAXWELL
No, you're not.

HERA
How would you know?

MAXWELL
Because I don't think you even noticed when the lights in this room went out.

HERA
I -

And that's when she notices. Maxwell is right - at some point in the previous two pages, the lights in the room all went dark.

HERA (CONT'D)
(frustrated sigh)
Uhhh... one moment.

The LIGHTS COMES BACK ON.

HERA (CONT'D)
Look, I'm sorry, but that was just -

MAXWELL
Momentary crossed wire, happens to everyone. No worries. But... *clearly* something's going on. Right now, it's just the two of us, but sooner or later the others will start to notice. Please... let me help. Because if we don't fix it -

HERA
(pointed)
Fix "it" or fix -

MAXWELL
- if we don't **address** this... Kepler is going to make me do something. Something drastic.

HERA
What do you mean by "drastic?"

MAXWELL
Hera, look. It's complicated. I don't know if right now is the best time to -

HERA
That's funny, because I'm really clever and I think right now is a great time.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Don't patronize me and answer the question.
(BEAT)
What are you going to do?

We hear a DEEP INTAKE OF BREATH from Maxwell, and -

But at that moment we hear the BUZZ of the comms.

KEPLER
(over comms)
Maxwell? Can I get you on the aft support bay for a moment? I need a second opinion on one of Jacobi's launch trajectories.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Yes, Colonel. I'll be right there.

Another BUZZER as the line closes.

BEAT.

HERA
Well? Don't keep the man waiting. You don't want him to do anything *drastic*.

MAXWELL
Okay. I - we're just talking, all right? Don't -

HERA
Don't *what*?

MAXWELL
Just don't... Do anything rash. Run some command lines, see what Eiffel's up to, whatever you want. We'll figure this out when I get back. Okay?
(BEAT)
<u>Okay, Hera</u>?

HERA
Fine.

MAXWELL
Okay.

With that, Maxwell OPENS the door, and EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - DOCKING BAY - 1315 HOURS

Eiffel and Minkowski, together in the docking bay.

MINKOWSKI
For the last time, Eiffel: no, I don't need any help!

EIFFEL
You sure? Because Hera said that you -

MINKOWSKI
Yes, I'm sure.

EIFFEL
It does... sorta look like a two-person job from where I'm -

MINKOWKSI
I've got it! Okay?
(BEAT)
I'll take care of it.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Commander... call this the ol' proverbial shot in the dark, but... is something up?

MINKOWSKI
No. Everything is fine.

EIFFEL
You sure? Because lately I've kind of been feeling like there's some... big pink Heffalump that only *you* can see in the room whenever it's just the two of us.

MINKOWSKI
(don't look at me while I lie)
On every possible level: I have no idea what you're talking about.

EIFFEL
Well... okay. But if there's... *anything* going on... communicating with the communications officer is usually where those things start getting resolved, no?

BEAT.

Minkowski TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Look, Eiffel -

BZZAP! Whatever Minkowski was working on just gave her a SMALL ELECTRIC SHOCK.

MINKWOSKI
Owww! Goddammit all...

Eiffel SIGHS, then clicks on the COMMS.

EIFFEL
Uh, Her-2-D2? Whatever part of the Millennium Falcon Commander Han-Kowski is working on just gave her about two hundred volts. You wanna maybe use the Force and see if there's anything on that shouldn't be?

HERA
Uh.... no.
(BEAT)
Wait. Wait, yes, yes, there is. Sorry, I'm shutting down that grid right now. Sorry, Lieutenant!

MINKOWSKI
(Oww)
It's... okay...

EIFFEL
Everything okay, Hera?

HERA
It's <u>fine</u>, Eiffel. I just forgot to shut down that grid.

EIFFEL
(raised eyebrow)
I didn't know you could forget stuff.

HERA
It's not... forgetting, exactly, but sometimes the way my memory banks archive and access data... It's complicated.

Around here, we start to hear the sound of SOFT WIND.

EIFFEL
Okay, sure... So, uh, what did Dr. Skynet want to talk about?

HERA
She... You know what? It's not important.

EIFFEL
Really? Because from the way she -

HERA
(glitching)
I said**: it's not important.**

The sound of WIND is GETTING LOUDER... Eiffel and Minkowski are starting to feel it now.

EIFFEL
Umm, what... ever you say. Cool. And speaking of cool things, it's getting a little... wind-tunnel-y in the hangar bay. How come we're getting Jack Frosted?

HERA
Uh... Hang on a sec. Let me track that down.

But at that moment, there's another BUZZER as another line comes on.

JACOBI
(over comms)
Hey, is there any reason why I'm not seeing the new booster projections up here? Mostly look at you, Hera...

HERA
Umm, right. Mr. Jacobi, I'll have that for you in just a -

BUZZER.

HILBERT
(over comms)
Hera? Run synthetics test 317-1A on sample I am inputting now. Also initiate temperature increase in aft support lab by four degrees.

HERA
Ugh, yes. Yes. Hold on.

HILBERT
(over comms)
No need to take tone about it...

BZZZT. We start hearing ELECTRICAL FEEDBACK over the following:

LOVELACE
(over comms, echo-y)
Hey, Hera? Any update on proofing those nav templates I sent you earlier?

HERA
I'm working on it, sirs.

LOVELACE
(over comms, echo-y)
Sirs?

Eiffel and Minkowski look at each other.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh... Hera?

EIFFEL
Is there something wrong with the comms and the PA? Or - ?

JACOBI
(over comms, glitchy)
Also, Hera, do you know what the deal is with the vents in A.S.R. 10? It's starting to get super spotty.

HERA
Sure, Captain. Give me a moment.

There's a BURST OF STATIC, and then again -

HERA (CONT'D)
Sure, Captain. Give me a moment.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
That's, uh... Pathway 713-, no, no, route 571, route five -

Another BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL
(low, to Minkowski)
Commander? Are you alarmed? Because I'm starting to -

MINKOWSKI
Hey everyone? If you're experiencing the same kind of weird feedback we're getting, maybe we should all take a second to let Hera -

But - BUZZER.

KEPLER
(over comms, glitchy)
Hera, the access code to support deck isn't responding. Correct any malfunctions, please.

HERA
(overwhelmed)
Right, right away, Colonel!
(BEAT)
There, that should take care of the problem.

But at that moment, an ALARM BLARES.

EIFFEL
Uhh... Hera? Is there - ?

HERA
(oh my god shut up)
Eiffel, hold on for just a second, please -

EIFFEL
Uhhh... I'm not sure this is something that can wait. We're starting to get some -

ANGRY LOCKDOWN SIRENS start going off.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- **that.** We're starting to get some **that!**

KEPLER
(over comms)
What the hell is happening over there? What tripped the alarms?

MINKOWSKI
Wait a minute... this is the lockdown protocol. Hera, you need to stop this right now!

HERA
(hyperventilating)
Run - run - run - **yes Lieutenant, I know that** - pathway 317-1A - wrong - right - right - right - release -

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Lockdown doors start slamming down all over the station. Minkowski pulls herself to a console, starts typing.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
Okay, what the hell is going on?!

JACOBI
(over comms, banging on the door)
We're shut in is what's going on!

MINKOWSKI
Everyone in aft support, you have to get out of there! NOW! The station's running isolate and jettison protocols.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
WHAT?!

JACOBI
(over comms)
WHAT?!

HILBERT
(over comms, glitchy)
There is no emergency in *any* support bay! It should not be doing that!

JACOBI
(over comms, glitchy)
You mean venting us into space?! No s-

HERA
Shift to route six - no, seven - no dammit, ugh, 789 pathway A - I can't - pathway - just *please* - I -
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
(in her COMPUTER PROCESSOR VOICE)
Initiating jettison procedures.

KEPLER
(over comms)
Someone override that right the hell now!

MINKOWSKI
(typing)
I'm trying...

EIFFEL
(low)
How many people are in that section?

MINKOWSKI
Everyone except that two of us and Maxwell. It's half the crew.

The alarms get LOUDER, and take on an even more URGENT TONE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Door controls aren't responding. Anyone near the armory? Maybe we can force it free.

The station starts to SHAKE, tossing everyone off their orientation.

HERA
Please just - stop - run - stop - run - stop...

BZZZZSST! There's a HUGE ELECTRICAL SPARK, and then the sound of a computer - more specifically, an AI autopilot - POWERING DOWN. The alarms stop, too.

A BEAT for everyone to appreciate how still alive they are. Then the PA CHIMES.

MAXWELL
Um...so... Hey, everyone. Lockdown and jettison procedure aborted. And I, uh... just took Hera offline. Sorry about that.
(BEAT)
Standby for... I don't know. Just please standby.

Off of that promising note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - 30 MINUTES LATER

We hear a DRILL, and the RATTLING of a metal door. Eiffel and Minkowski are dismounting it to let Kepler, Jacobi, Hilbert, and Lovelace out.

As they toil, Maxwell works at a portable console she's hooked into the Hephaestus mainframe.

MAXWELL
(low, typing...)
Run... mother program... reboot...

She HITS a KEY. Her computer WHIRRS for a moment, and then emits an "ERROR" buzzer.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
(reading)
... program... *unresponsive*?

She lets out a LOW BREATH. This is bad...

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hera...

There's a BUZZER as the Comms engages.

KEPLER
(over comms)
How much longer before the doors are opened?

MINKOWSKI
Two minutes, sir.

JACOBI
(over comms)
You said that two minutes ago.

MINKOWSKI
These blast doors weren't exactly made to be taken apart. We're going as fast as we can.

DRIIIILLL. DRIIIIIILLL.

EIFFEL
Do we know what brought this on?

MAXWELL
I have some ideas but... Actually it would be helpful to know: has Hera caused any other systems failures? Or crashes?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah, once or twice... You know, she's been a little twitchy ever since Hilbert *tore her brains out*.

MAXWELL
No, I know about - I mean before that. Did you ever notice anything about Hera being... off?

EIFFEL
No.

MINKOWSKI
Everything was fine.

They work for a BEAT. And then...

EIFFEL
Well... actually...

MINKOWSKI
There *were* problems. Remember that time climate control got down to 400 below?

EIFFEL
Oh. Yeah. And cold shower September our first year up.

MINKOWSKI
There was the crash of the pressure system, that huge power outage...

EIFFEL
And that time with the airlock...
(sighs)
Yeah. Yeah, I guess this isn't our first game of Metal Gear Not-So-Solid.

MAXWELL
(low)
Okay... Good to know.

EIFFEL
Maxwell... how bad is this? How freaked out do we need to be?

BEAT. Then, Maxwell takes a DEEP BREATH and -

But at that moment, there's a metallic CLANG and -

MINKOWSKI
Got it!

Minkowski and Eiffel GROAN as they pull the door away.

Once it's out of the way, they are rejoined by Hilbert, Lovelace, Jacobi - all frustrated - and Kepler - all fury.

KEPLER
Report.

MAXWELL
Obviously, we had an issue with our autopilot. I shut Hera down, and put us on manual controls. My best guess is that she experienced a micro-synaptic function overload, probably with -

KEPLER
Meaning?

MAXWELL
The way Hera's signal inputs regulate stimuli within their... Okay, think of it this way: it's like a panic attack. The brain just gets too overwhelmed by negative impulse. The attempted lockdown and structural release were physical symptoms of her trying to deal with the surge. That's the best case scenario.

LOVELACE
And the worst case?

MAXWELL
Core corruption. Complete loss of function. But I don't think so. If we were dealing with that, a lot more would have gone wrong.

JACOBI
More things could have gone wrong?

MAXWELL
The person that makes your oxygen, temperature, pressure, and water crashed and you didn't die.
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Yes, *more things could have gone wrong.*
(BEAT)
But the issue is... I haven't been able to get her to reboot. All of the mechanical and engineering components are working properly, but... she's non-responsive.

KEPLER
What are my options?

MAXWELL
I can go into the software. Run a full diagnostic and try to do a reconfiguration.

LOVELACE
What does that entail?

MAXWELL
The root cause is usually distributed throughout the memory -

KEPLER
Maxwell...

MAXWELL
- it's reconstructive surgery! More or less.

EIFFEL
... you can do that?

MAXWELL
I can *try* that. Go through her memory directory, see if I can track down the root of the problem. If it's something I can remove, I'll take it out.

MINKOWSKI
And if it's not?

MAXWELL
Then it's... not. And we need to consider the alternatives.

HILBERT
Might be prudent to proceed *directly* to the alternatives.

JACOBI
Yeah. It sounds like it might be time for a dummy program to me.

EIFFEL
A what?

MAXWELL
No. We're not doing that.

JACOBI
Why not?

MAXWELL
Because a dummy program is a *stupid* idea.

JACOBI
But it's a stupid idea that *wouldn't* accidentally vent us into space, *isn't it*?

EIFFEL
Guys: what's a dummy program?

MAXWELL
That's not even what -

JACOBI
Would it vent - ?

MAXWELL
No, it wouldn't! But dummies always create more problems than they solve in the long run.

HILBERT
Depends how much control you cede.

MAXWELL
There are too many variables. The system integrations *alone* would probably -

EIFFEL
(snap!)
Would somebody please tell me what the hell a dummy program is?!

BEAT.

MAXWELL
A dummy program is kind of... the neanderthal version of an AI.
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
It would be *like* Hera. Intuitive, basic thought processes. But its personality wouldn't be as... existent.

HILBERT
System is not as complex, but there is less to get wrong.

LOVELACE
And you could create one?

MAXWELL
Oh yeah. It'd take me a couple days to write it, but it's not hard. Emphasize life support and structural stability, leave the higher-level stuff to us.

MINKOWSKI
Well, it's wouldn't be ideal, but if the work you have to do with Hera is that extensive, it *would* be helpful for us to have -

MAXWELL
Uh, n-no, no, that's - It doesn't work like that.

EIFFEL
Like what?

MAXWELL
(slow, gentle)
Installing a dummy takes over the processors. It isn't a temporary -

HILBERT
(out with it)
It would overwrite Hera program.

MINKOWSKI
What?

MAXWELL
Yeah, what - I wouldn't be able to recover Hera. She'd just be -

EIFFEL
WHAT?! No! We are not letting Nurse Ratched here give Hera a lobotomy and we're <u>definitely</u> not even thinking about -

KEPLER
***ENOUGH*.**

An involuntary chill passes through the room.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Yes, sir?

KEPLER
You'll come with me to the bridge. We will discuss this, and decide on a course of action.

EIFFEL
What?! You can't just -

KEPLER
WHAT, Eiffel?! What can't I do? Can I not order everyone else to get out of my sight, and get the undoubtedly long list of repairs underway?

EIFFEL
You can't seriously be considering **deleting** one of your crew members!

We can only imagine the nightmarish look Kepler gives him.

KEPLER
Officer Eiffel, you need to get it into your head that there is a very long list of things I can, and *will*, do without your permission. Now, is anyone in this room besides Dr. Maxwell an expert in artificial intelligences?

Silence.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
No? Is anyone else the commanding officer of this station?

Again, crickets.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Well, all right then. Can anyone in this room do basic station maintenance?

A chorus of small YES-es, and YES, SIRs from everyone.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Then I suggest you all get to it.

MINKOWSKI
Sir, in fairness -

KEPLER
Clean up engineering, Minkowski.
Eiffel, you too.

JACOBI
Sir? Could I -

KEPLER
Jacobi, hydraulics and filtration.
Anyone else need a job *assigned* to
them?
(silent BEAT)
Good. Dismissed.

Everyone shuffles off to their respective tasks. Once everyone else is gone -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Maxwell? Let's go.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir.

They open a door, crossing over into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

For a moment they just travel in silence. Then Kepler lets out a LOW BREATH.

KEPLER
Honest answer now, Doctor, just
between the two of us: this
reconstruction of yours... How
difficult would that be?

MAXWELL
... tricky.

KEPLER
Tricky for *you*?

MAXWELL
Tricky for me.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
But, sir, in the long run, we're much better off by having -

Kepler holds up his hand. He's heard this before.

KEPLER
I agree. If it can be done.
(BEAT)
Maxwell, I'm not going to remind you of how important this mission is. Nor am I going to remind you that in times like these you cannot let your political convictions get in the way of your job. However, I must remind you that you are a doctor, and you have a duty of care.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir. That's why -

KEPLER
And at a certain point... that responsibility goes from making sure that this station's A.I. unit isn't hurt to making sure that no one else is hurt *because* of the A.I. That is the job you are here to perform. Correct?

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir. That's correct.

KEPLER
Good.
(BEAT)
Don't forget what she is, Maxwell. You've been over the file. You've seen her record. You know that she was rejected by the Science Board. And that -

MAXWELL
I don't see how that is -

KEPLER
- and that she went rogue... and tried to escape from the testing facility.
(BEAT)
There's a reason she's up here. She's always been problematic.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You knew that when you signed up, and you knew that she'd be an expendable asset. Don't get sentimental, Alana. It doesn't become you.

MAXWELL
What is the point? Sir?

KEPLER
The point is as follows: you are the expert here. I will follow your lead. Up to a point. But make sure your priorities are what they need to be. This station stays in the air. Nothing comes before that. And if you make me, I *will* step in and make the call.
(BEAT)
Don't make me.

MAXWELL
Yes. Sir.

Well... this all seems kinda not than great. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - 1 HOUR LATER

Minkowski and Eiffel are doing repairs, and stewing in an hour-long awkward silence.

We stew in it for a moment, too. The occasional HUFF or SIGH from the people in the room as they work.

EIFFEL
Hey, can I get some fuse tape?

A BEAT as she fishes through the kit.

MINKOWSKI
Here.

EIFFEL
Thanks.
(BEAT)
You think we would've heard something by now.
(BEAT)
I mean, Warren G. Hardass and Philipa K.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Dick are gonna get us out of Pitch Black mode *soon*, right?
(BEAT, darker)
You'd think we'd've hear *something* by now...

BEAT.

BEAT.

CLANG! Eiffel's thrown his wrench into a pipe.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
OKAY, THAT'S IT! *That's it!* I can't take this anymore!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, what the - ?

EIFFEL
Just say something! Say *anything*.

MINKOWSKI
What are you talking about? I -

EIFFEL
It's bad enough that there's <u>nothing</u> I can do to stop this Invasion of the Software Snatchers! I <u>cannot</u> have you not talking to me, too!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Just say it. Say it! Whatever it is that's been stuck in your craw for the past, like, three months!

Minkowski's jaw tightens. BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh my God, seriously, you're just -

MINKOWSKI
(so fast)
I know about your jail sentence!
(BEAT)
The time Kepler asked us to sync the Hephaestus archives with his server, we... accidentally saw some documents. About your sentence.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(flat, low)
Does everyone know?

MINKOWSKI
No. Just me. Well, me and Jacobi.

EIFFEL
Got it.
(BEAT)
'kay.

Eiffel turns away from her, going to grab his wrench.

MINKOWSKI
Hey, turn around! You started this, you don't get to leave it there! Don't you have *any* explanation?

Eiffel looks at her over his shoulder.

EIFFEL
No.

MINKOWSKI
You're telling me you don't have *anything* to say for yourself?
(BEAT)
I'm sorry, okay? I didn't want it to matter. I was trying to make it not matter.

EIFFEL
By avoiding me.

MINKOWSKI
I didn't say I was doing a good job of it.
(beat)
Eiffel... what happened? Why did you do it?

EIFFEL
(low)
Doesn't matter.

MINKOWSKI
Of course it matters, you idiot! You *kidnapped* someone - tell me the goddamn sob story! You rescued your neglected nephew! Or there was an evil stepmother! Or something!

EIFFEL
(muttered)
It's not gonna change anything.

MINKOWSKI
(her commander voice)
Officer Eiffel, if you don't tell me right the hell now, I am going to -

EIFFEL
Kidnapping isn't the worst part.

MINKOWSKI
... what?

EIFFEL
(chuckles)
All right. You wanna know? You want a story? Okay: strap the hell in.
(clears his throat dramatically)
Once upon a time, there was a boy named Doug. And Doug lived in a far away kingdom called... Texas. One day, while Doug's out playing with his radio, he meets this *real* special girl. Jury's still out on whether she was his dream girl or bis nightmare demon monster from the Black Lagoon, but they start going out because... well, he's had worse ideas.

So, for a while things are all happy ever after. Then, for a while, things get *real* Sid and Nancy. But just when the tower of Babel's about to come crashing down, along comes a magical, bouncing, baby girl.

Eiffel EXHALES, and then steels himself.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
For a while, it was okay. Doug was seeing little baby Anne pretty much every other day, *talking* to her every day, teaching her to play the Jaws theme on her little dinky kid xylophone, all the good stuff. Hilariously... our man's pretty great at it.

MINKOWSKI
At being a dad?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah. Until he slips up. See, fun fact about Officer Eiffel: Dougie Boy doesn't like to have a drink. Dougie Boy doesn't like to have two drinks, or four drinks, or six drinks. Doug likes to have *twelve* drinks. Fifteen drinks. But when Doug has a kid, he thinks it's time to go the full Robert Downey Jr. He goes to meetings, gets cleaned up. And then one day - one *bad* day - he has **one** drink. **One.** Then it's showtime folks! The Doug Eiffel Limbo: How Low Will He Go?

Minkowski watches him, rigid.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Kate, our story's angel-slash-demon-slash-ex-girlfriend, freaks out, because... well, because she has a brain. Custody was never gonna go Doug's way because *duh*. And after that... well, Dougie-Doug goes to a bad place. He turn into a bit of a... a good old fashioned monster.

And one night, about two months later, he pulls up to Kate's house, jimmys open the back door, gets his daughter in the car, and rides off into the sunset. Happy ever after, right?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
I didn't even make it on the highway. High school junior, and his younger brother. They were coming home from the airport. I don't even remember the crash. Just the headlights.

MINKOWSKI
And everyone... wasn't okay?

Eiffel LAUGHS.

EIFFEL
No. When you put the Model UN President in a wheelchair, you've definitely missed the exit for "okay." But I was fine. Of course I was fine. The driver's always fine.

MINKOWSKI
And...

EIFFEL
Anne? Yeah, that's where this whole story starts getting real poetical. Cranial trauma. Acute acoustic damage. It was bad. Deaf for the rest of your life bad.
(BEAT)
Maybe Evil Incorporated's HMO is helping. I dunno. I haven't talked to her since... Well, since.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
God. I don't know what to say.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(soft)
Say Hera's gonna be okay.

For a moment, there's only silence between them. Then we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - LATER

Maxwell and Jacobi. He's helping her set up tech around one of the consoles.

JACOBI
So... you're **really** going to try this?

MAXWELL
Yep.

JACOBI
Reconstructive software configuration. Does this actually work?

MAXWELL
Yeah, totally.
(types in something)
You know. In theory.

JACOBI
In theory?

MAXWELL
It's a good theory.

JACOBI
Have you ever... done something like this before?

MAXWELL
(chuckles)
Uh... no, not so much. This'll be... something new for everyone.

Whatever gear she was setting up is ready, and we hear it POWER UP with a STEADY HUM.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
All right, I guess... that's it. Time to go in.

JACOBI
Maxwell, you've got this.

MAXWELL
Oh yeah. Just gonna... go into a constructed artificial memory state and try to see if I can figure out what's causing a series of electro-neurological breakdowns. Piece of cake.
(BEAT)
Wish me luck?

JACOBI
Good luck.

MAXWELL
Okay.
(deep breath)
Let's do this.

And as the MACHINE POWER UP, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 40.

WOLF 359

"MEMORIA"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Days 1041-1043 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 41.

BEGIN RECORDING:

No opening credits for the moment. Instead, we go into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - MESS HALL - DAY 188 - 2000 HOURS

EIFFEL
I'm gonna say... pinball machines.

Eiffel, Minkowski, and Hilbert, gathered around a table.

MINKOWSKI
Pinball machines?

EIFFEL
Yep.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... we are having Thanksgiving dinner seven and a half light years away from America. The amount of technological miracles making that possible staggers the mind, and what you are deciding to be thankful for is -

EIFFEL
Pinball machines. Really loud ones.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Well, that's actually less horrific than what I was expecting. Hilbert?

HILBERT
Idea of Thanksgiving is not applicable outside terrestrial -

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert...

Hilbert emits an ANNOYED GROWL, but...

HILBERT
Gallium. Excellent semiconductor, perfect adaptive agent for radiopharmaceuticals. Work would be very difficult without it.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I guess that counts?

MINKOWSKI
(clears her throat)
Well, for *my* part, I'm thankful to have such a great crew on this mission, and I'm thankful for 188 days of... *mostly* smooth sailing. May the rest of our time here continue to -

EIFFEL
Yadda yadda yadda, can I gorge yet?

MINKOWSKI
I retract my gratitude about you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I'm not hearing a "no"...

HERA
Commander?

Sharp listeners **may** notice that Hera's voice lacks its usual post-production filters.

HERA (CONT'D)
Can... can I say something?

EIFFEL
I don't know, HAL. Can you open the pod bay doors?

MINKOWSKI
Cut it out, Eiffel. Yes, of course it would be all right, Hera. What are you thankful for?

HERA
Memoria.

Eiffel and Minkowski exchange a look: *Huh?*

MINKOWSKI
Memoria? What do you mean by that?

HERA
"I will soar, then, beyond this power of my nature, and rise by degrees towards him who made me.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
I enter the fields and spacious halls of memory, where are stored the countless images that have been brought into them from all manner of things by the senses. There, in the memory, is stored what we cogitate, either by enlarging or reducing our perceptions, or by altering one way or another those things which the sense have made contact with; and everything else that has been entrusted to it and stored up in it, and which oblivion has not yet swallowed up and buried."

There's a long, puzzled BEAT before -

EIFFEL
Far out, man.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... what was that?

HERA
Umm, it's from St. Augustine. *Confessions*. I've been going through the writing, and -

MINKOWSKI
Which writing?

HERA
Well... **all** the writing. I think it's all in here, more or less.

MINKOWSKI
You've been going through all of written human history... and you're already at the fourth century?

HERA
No. I'm... *almost* done with "A." But I've been thinking a lot about how we perceive things, and how we... *store* things? You know, the difference between a thought, and a memory, and how you can have a memory of a thought, but not -

EIFFEL
Hey, can we go back to the Gallium thingamabob? Or - oooh!
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- better idea: can we make with face-stuffing already?

MINKOWSKI
Would it kill - we haven't even said grace yet!

EIFFEL
Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub. Let's eat!

HILBERT
Amen.

And with that, the two men start reaching across the table.

MINKOWSKI
But... ah, forget it.

There's a flurry of passing, shifting, and chomping.

EIFFEL
Mmm, that's *so* good!

MINKOWSKI
Doctor, could I get the rolls?

Hera looks at the others, slightly confused.

HERA
Umm...

EIFFEL
I can't believe we have real turkey!

MINKOWSKI
Enjoy it while it lasts.

HILBERT
Carrots, please.

HERA
Would it...

There's something very, very wrong here, but she can't place her finger on it. The other eat on, completely oblivious.

EIFFEL
Mmm, this gravy is amazing, Commander.

HERA
Could I -

MINKOWSKI
Thank Hilbert for that.

HILBERT
Who's got the salt?

EIFFEL
This is all so good!

HERA
Could you all just be quiet for a moment and let me try to - !

Her voice got louder than she meant it to. Everything stops.

HERA (CONT'D)
I'm - I'm sorry. But... there's something wrong here, isn't there?

Everyone stares at her, like she's not getting the most obvious thing in the world. Then -

EIFFEL
Uhh, yeah. This isn't how this happened. Duh.

HERA
... what?

Minkowski lets out a BREATH. *Oookay, I'll explain*.

MINKOWSKI
You're remembering this wrong. You weren't here with us.

HERA
I... I wasn't?

MINKOWSKI
No, Hera. We were over here, and you...

The soundscape shifts. There's a WOOSH, followed by some DIGITAL PROCESSING. It subsides, and when Minkowski says -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
... you were over *there*.

- she sounds like her voice is coming through a SPEAKER. And it GLITCHES. We hear her the way we normally hear Hera.

HERA
Oh. Right. I'm here. I'm here.

EIFFEL
(also sounding glitchy)
Honestly, I really don't know what's going on with her like... ninety percent of the time.

HILBERT
(also glitchy)
Artificial Intelligence is inexact science. Many design flaws still need to be corrected.

HERA
(low, to herself)
I'm here. I'm here. Right, right. How could I forget?

MAXWELL
Well...

Suddenly, inexplicably, Maxwell is next to her. Holding one of her iPad-like control panels.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Memories can be pretty tricky things to nail down.

HERA
Doc - Doctor Maxwell? How are you here? You weren't there for -

MAXWELL
No, I wasn't there for that dinner. Looks like fun, though.
(BEAT)
I'm... sort of inside your head right now.

HERA
Excuse me?

MAXWELL
Yeah... and, uh, you may want to hang onto something. This is gonna get a little... *complicated.*

OPENING CREDITS

(NOTE: From this point onwards, we hear Hera **without** the usual filters/glitches that color her voice, and everyone else - with the notable exception of Maxwell - **with** them.)

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY (MENTAL STATE)

Hera and Maxwell together. Around them we hear the soft crash of OCEAN WAVES.

HERA
Oookay... let me see if I got this straight. You... shut me down?

MAXWELL
Yes, and I am so, so sorry. It was a matter of life or death.

HERA
Okay. And now when you try to get me to reboot... I'm not responding?

MAXWELL
Right.

HERA
Which is why you've put me into a... *what again*?

MAXWELL
A state of pure memory consciousness, filtered through your software diagnostic mode. Basically, we're inside your head. Well, your memories.
(snaps her fingers)
We're in a pensieve!

HERA
What?

MAXWELL
A pensieve! You ever read the Harry Potter books? You remember that big, wibbly bowl of ghost memories they would go into to look at stuff in the past? It's basically that.

HERA
Terrific. How are *you* here?

MAXWELL
Through a lot of very complicated, very fast typing.

A bigger WAVE CRASHES around them.

HERA
Also, I've never been to a beach, so how are we - ?

MAXWELL
Artificial construct, based on your abstract idea of what a beach looks like. Memories are volatile, I needed a place for us to talk.

HERA
You know, I've kind of got this thing about people putting stuff in my head...

MAXWELL
Hera, we need to finish the conversation we started on -

HERA
There's nothing to talk about.

MAXWELL
Trust me, us talking is the only -

HERA
Just leave me alone.

MAXWELL
I'll leave you alone... if you reboot for me.

HERA
(rolling her eyes)
Ugh... all right, fine.

She closes her eyes, concentrating. ELECTRICITY CRACKLES.

HERA (CONT'D)
Command line zero. Return to first line of master directory. Execute command... **now.**

And right after the now, barely perceptible, is a tiny BLIP.

Hera opens her eyes, looks around. Waves crash...

HERA (CONT'D)
That... should have worked.

MAXWELL
Now can we talk?

HERA
Just... give me some time, okay?

MAXWELL
I would like nothing more than that, but I can't main this state for long.
(BEAT)
Hera, you can tell me what's going on... or I can start pulling apart your memories.

HERA
You can **what?**

MAXWELL
I'll look for files with similar emotional peaks as right before your panic attack. Simple pattern recognition. If I go through enough of these, I'll figure it out. Probably.

HERA
Figure **what** out?

MAXWELL
Which memories I need to delete.

HERA
Excuse me?

MAXWELL
These sorts of breakdowns are almost always a cognitive block from a corrupted memory file. If I can just figure out which are the problematic ones and delete -

HERA
No. No!

MAXWELL
Hera, I can do this with or without your cooperation. It'll be **much** more unpleasant, and I might get it wrong a few times, but -

HERA
You get out of my head and -

MAXWELL
(shrug)
Fair enough. We'll do it your way.

She punches a command into the controls, and a PULSE goes through the scene. After it's done, we've -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - AFT DECK - 1800 HOURS (DAY 57)

One of Hera's memories. Instantly, in a cut, the waves become HISSING VALVES and TURNING GEARS.

HERA
Whoa. Oookay. I just went somewhere. Or sometime. This is... early days. I must be -

A DOOR OPENS. Minkowski enters, carrying some tools.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I think I'm almost done with the tune up of the pressure system.

HERA
Lieutenant! Listen to me: I'm not really here. From my perspective -

MINKOWSKI
Could I get the pressure on the number three valve down to half?

HERA
Reducing number three valve pressure to fifty percent. But you were saying?

And just like that, Hera is completely lost in her memory.

Minkowski starts working on the pipes, tightening them with a wrench. As she does so -

MINKOWSKI
Oh, it's just from a play I saw once. It doesn't matter.
(BEAT)
The guy who sings it is this famous French painter. And his entire life is kinda falling apart. But he can always turn what's happening around him into these beautiful paintings.

HERA
And?

MINKOWSKI
And... That's, I don't know. Reassuring, maybe?
(BEAT)
I don't know why I'm going on about this. You don't care.

HERA
I think it's interesting.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah? Most people think it's *hilarious* that I like musicals.

HERA
I don't see what's funny about it.

MINKOWSKI
Well, thank you Hera, but you're not exactly... you know.

HERA
I'm not... what?

But at that moment, the DOOR OPENS.

EIFFEL
Hey, Minkowski, we've - What are you guys talking about?

MINKOWSKI
We were just discussing how I'm going to take away your hot water privileges if you don't reset the long-range scan.

EIFFEL
I took care of that *ages* ago.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, that's something you have to do **every day.**

EIFFEL
Pfft, yeah, **right.**
(BEAT)
Wait, really?

Minkowski lets out a LOW BREATH, crossing her arms.

MINKOWSKI
Did you need something?

EIFFEL
Yeah. There's this red flashy light show going on in the Hangar Bay.

MINKOWSKI
What did you do?

Around them, METAL GROANS.

EIFFEL
I promise, this one isn't on me. Hey, Windup Girl -

HERA
Please don't call me that.

EIFFEL
- do you know what's going on over there?

HERA
(sigh)
I'll do a quick diagnostic of all major systems, and see if there's anything near the hangar -

At that moment the VALVE Minkowski was working on BURSTS. AIR HISSES out of it as Eiffel and Minkowski YELP in ALARM.

MINKOWSKI
AHH! HERA! WHAT THE HELL?

HERA
Whoa, what - what just happened?

EIFFEL
OUR FRIGGIN' AIR IS GETTING SPACED!

MINKOWSKI
HERA! HARD RESET OF THE PRESSURE SYSTEM. NOW!

HERA
Right! Just... one moment...

MINKOWSKI
YOU DON'T HAVE A MOMENT! DO SOME-

Halfway through that word, a sound comes in. It's a sort of AMBIENT PULSE - a FWUM! And everything else sloooows down.

We are experiencing this moment at the full speed of Hera's brain. She takes a DEEP BREATH, centers herself, and then:

HERA
(lightning fast)
Shut off power to air flow terminals C, D, and E.

With each line, we hear digital counters adjusting, and electricity pulsing.

HERA (CONT'D)
Recalibrate climate controls. Run pressure release valves thirty-two through thirty-seven. Execute command... **now.**

And right after the now, barely perceptible: another BLIP.

Another PULSE - FWUM! - and the world speeds up again.

MINKOWSKI
- THING RIGHT THE HELL NOW!

But already the alarms have shut off. The rumbling subsides.

EIFFEL
Okay... I think that's better.

MINKOWSKI
Yes. Thank you, Hera. Also, **what the hell just happened?**

HERA
I'm - I'm sorry, Commander. There was an anomaly with... It's not going to happen again, I promise.

WOOSH. Suddenly everything is VERY STILL. ALL SOUND STOPS.

Hera looks around, confused.

MAXWELL
But it *did* happen again, didn't it?

HERA
Oh for... Is this really supposed to help? Making me relive a bunch of terrible memories?

The sound of the WAVES comes back in, and we return to -

EXT. BEACH - DAY (MENTAL STATE)

MAXWELL
Hey, this isn't exactly fun for me, either. Can we talk about this?

HERA
You sure want to talk? You don't wanna do **something drastic**?

MAXWELL
I don't **want** to do anything, Hera. But right now? I either do whatever it takes to get you to reboot or -

HERA
Or?

MAXWELL
Or I get to write your replacement.

Around them we hear a LOW RUMBLING.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
This is *well* past the point of drastic. This is *desperate*.

HERA
And what does *that* look like?

MAXWELL
We look for memories like that one. Moments of trauma. We find the corruption, whatever's interfering with your functionality.

HERA
And then what? You just take those memories out?

MAXWELL
No: I can rewrite them. I can make them better.

HERA
You can't rewrite a memory.

MAXWELL
I can **absolutely** rewrite a memory.

We hear her input some commands into her iPad, which HUMS.

HERA
Wait, what are you - ?

MAXWELL
Just painting a picture.

The sound of WAVES RECEDE, and we hear ghostly and echoey -

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
I've never met anyone like Hera.

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
As the Commander, I was there to lead the mission. But Hera... she was always one step ahead of me.

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
She made me a better captain. A better person.

KEPLER IN MEMORY
I've worked with plenty of A.I. units, but Hera was in a class of her own.

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
She just had this... grace.

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
Strength.

JACOBI IN MEMORY
Wit. So funny.

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
She's my best friend. Best friend I've ever had.

With a soft WOOSH the sound of the WAVES COMES BACK.

HERA
And those were... ?

MAXWELL
Memories. Well... potential memories.

She types more commands. The device HUMS -

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
And I don't know about you, but I think those sounds **a lot** better than -

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
Hera?
(exhales)
(MORE)

LOVELACE IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
There's incompetent and then there's... whatever she was.

Hera EXHALES.

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
Infuriatingly stubborn.

KEPLER IN MEMORY
Completely undependable.

HILBERT IN MEMORY
Emotionally unavailable.

JACOBI IN MEMORY
*I know that we were putting some... **experimental** units in the field but... Jesus.*

HERA
Okay, thank you, you've made your -

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
Nobody knows what she's saying.
(scoffs)
*Hell, nobody ever **wants** to know what -*

HERA
I said, **thank you.** I get it.

EIFFEL
Do you, though?

During the last line there was a WOOSH as we entered -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1900 HOURS (DAY 193)

Another memory. Eiffel talking to Hera in the comms room.

HERA
(low, to herself)
Oh for God's sake... a little warning would be nice...

EIFFEL
Don't get me wrong: you're smart. You're like... *really* smart, but can you really grasp the full tragedy of it?

HERA
Where am I...? Console says Day 192. Which means that you're probably talking about...

EIFFEL
This is *Star Wars* for God's sake!

HERA
... Star Wars. Of course.

EIFFEL
You can't just go back and **change** Star Wars. I mean, what's next? The Bible: Special Edition?

HERA
Isn't that what the New Testa - ?

EIFFEL
I mean, Greedo shoots first?Travesty. And don't get me started on that stupid digital Jabba...

HERA
Remind me again why this is so...?

EIFFEL
Because! It's a deleted scene. They took it out for a reason. You put it back in, and you're watching a completely different movie. You mess with the natural order.

HERA
... the natural order of - ?

EIFFEL
You don't mess with Star Wars!

At that moment, there's a sound of a THROAT CLEARING.

HILBERT
If I could interrupt?

EIFFEL
What can we do you for, Doc?

HILBERT
Hera, I have been waiting for the hydraulics system to reengage. Is there a reason for this delay?

HERA
Sorry, Doctor. I'll see what's going on with that as soon as -

HILBERT
Now.

HERA
... I'll take care of it right away. Sure.

HILBERT
Good.

A LONG SILENT BEAT as Hera begins to work on the hydraulics.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Do not distract mother program, Eiffel. Interferes with everyone's work.

EIFFEL
Huh? Can't Hera do like... twelve hundred different things at once?

HILBERT
In theory. But in practice one has to account for... shortcomings. Best to stay focused on our respective assignments. No one is here to make friends. Least of all the auto pilot.

EIFFEL
Umm... You sure you wanna...? Can't she hear everything you're saying?

HILBERT
(shrug)
Yes - I imagine so.

Hera EXHALES. And then -

MAXWELL
Whoa. That was uncalled for.

With another WOOSH the scene shifts, and we return to -

EXT. BEACH - DAY (MENTAL STATE)

HERA
Could you at least give me a warning before -

MAXWELL
Like I said: memories. Volatile.
I'm not completely in control here.

Around them, we hear RUMBLING. Louder than before.

HERA
What **is** that?

MAXWELL
This space is deteriorating. We
won't be able to...

But Maxwell trails off, suddenly winded.

HERA
Are... are you okay?

MAXWELL
(breathless)
I'm... fine. It takes... a lot of
effort... for me to be here...

More RUMBLING. LOUDER. Hera takes a DEEP BREATH.

HERA
Okay. Explain. Make your case.

Maxwell adjusts some controls. As she does -

MAXWELL
Your mental infrastructure... is
built... is built on...

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
Your mental infrastructure is built on a hierarchy of systems.

HERA
Wait, what are you doing?

MAXWELL
Pulling in... local resources.

JACOBI IN MEMORY
First is computational. Numbers. One plus one is two. Two plus two is four...

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
Second is linguistics. Word processing. A, B, C, D...

HILBERT IN MEMORY
Third is sensory. Visual, auditory, and physical perception.

KEPLER IN MEMORY
And fourth is your ability to recall data acquired by the first three systems for immediate use. Your primary storage system, more commonly known as -

HERA
(I'm with you)
Memory.

KEPLER IN MEMORY
Bingo.

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
What you remember and forget -

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
*- **how** you remember and forget -*

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
- defines your reasoning, problem-solving, and every other system.

JACOBI IN MEMORY
*Memory's the tipping point. It's where the **you** comes in.*

HERA
Where I come in?

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
Think about it.

HILBERT IN MEMORY
Everything before memory is about the world around you. Everything after it is all in your head.

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
It's where you go from objective reality to subjective reality.

JACOBI IN MEMORY
And where you - like you specifically, Hera - go from object to subject.

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
It's like you're making a movie, right?

HERA
Eiffel...

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
I'm serious. You point a camera somewhere, and get it running? It'll just... run. That's all it does. It's not a movie... until you start cutting things out. Until you start putting things together. ***Then*** *you've got something.*

JACOBI IN MEMORY
But change the edits?

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
You get a new movie.

KEPLER IN MEMORY
Change the memory?

HILBERT IN MEMORY
And you get a new perspective.

LOVELACE IN MEMORY
A new subjective reality.

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
A new... you.

HERA
(not buying it)
All of that... just by changing a memory?

Maxwell stoops down, picks up a rock.

MAXWELL
One stone.
(tosses it into water)
Lots of ripples.

Around them, the world SHAKES.

HERA
Okay... but what are -

WOOSH. Suddenly the scene shits, and we are in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - AFT DECK - 1310 HOURS - (DAY 782)

A memory we're familiar with. Lovelace, Minkowski, and Hera, together in the AFT DECK. From EPISODE 29.

HERA
- you going to and I just went somewhere again.
(exhales)
Ooookay. That's getting really annoying.

LOVELACE
How many systems on this station are <u>fully</u> operational?

HERA
Oh no. Not this again.

LOVELACE
How many parts of the infrastructure are stable?

HERA
Nope. I'm not getting into this.

LOVELACE
Oh, are you? Tell me, what's going on with the showers in the crew quarters?

HERA
I'm not listening...

LOVELACE
What about that interference in the radar system?

HERA
Don't care.

LOVELACE
Dead circuits in the hangar bay rigging?

HERA
You're not going to -

LOVELACE
Well, that's nice. You know what all those things have in common? They were all broken *before* the star went crazy. Face it, it's not just the star. It's the autopilot.

Aaaand she's gone, now fully immersed in the memory.

HERA
You want to get out of my face.
Right now.

LOVELACE
Okay, tell you what: do something
for me. Just... count to ten.
Without glitching. Prove to me that
you *can* do something right, and
I'll leave you alone.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, you don't have to -

HERA
Be quiet, Commander.
(beat)
One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six.
Seven. Ei-eight.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Yeah, that's what I thought.

HERA
That's not my -

WOOSH!

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY (MENTAL STATE)

HERA
- fault!

Hera blinks. She's back at the beach.

HERA (CONT'D)
Oh for God's sake. There *has* to be
a better way to do this.

MAXWELL
Sorry, I almost lost you there.

HERA
Yeah. I noticed.

There's a LONG BEAT.

MAXWELL
There's still some time left. We might still be able to fix -

HERA
- me?
(BEAT)
So here's what I don't understand. I remember things. *Fine*, whatever. But why not stop there? Why make me forget things? Why can my memories give me fears and insecurities and weaknesses? Seems like a design flaw.

MAXWELL
Because you're a person.

HERA
Ha-ha. Very funny.

MAXWELL
Really. No one expects perfection. That's never been the point. You're here to be a member of this crew. To have your own opinions, and your own unique perspective. And that means you're going to be wrong sometimes. That's the price.

The world RUMBLES, ominously.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hera, perhaps I haven't been clear. We have exactly **two options.** On the one hand: we work together. We find what's wrong, we *fix it*. You get better. On the other hand: Colonel Kepler makes me delete you. How is that even a choice?

HERA
It's not. **Delete me.**

MAXWELL
Are you listening to yourself? I can rewrite your -

HERA
No.
(BEAT)
They had their chance. They could have made me better. They made me me. Now you get to live with it.

MAXWELL
Aren't you forgetting your responsibility to the people on -

HERA
NO.
(quieter)
No. That's what you want. This is my life, and you don't get to rewrite it to fit what you need.
(BEAT)
I don't want to go, but if this is it? I'd rather go as me, thank you very much.

With a WHOOSH we go to -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - KEPLER'S QUARTERS - 2200 HOURS (DAY 915)

Another memory. Kepler and Jacobi in the Colonel's quarters. Kepler drinks from a glass of scotch. Kepler leafs through a file, chuckling to himself.

KEPLER
This is quite a record, young lady. Don't you think so, Mr. Jacobi?

JACOBI
I think it definitely qualifies as <u>a</u> record, Colonel.

KEPLER
Temperature fluctuations, massive system failures, orbital miscalculations...

JACOBI
Something about *attempted* crew member homicide? Or was it *multiple* attempted crew -

HERA
Sir? I can - ?

KEPLER
I mean it, Hera. This record is a goddam disaster.

JACOBI
Cataclysmic.

KEPLER
Of course... this whole situation is unprecedented. Way outside your original parameters, isn't it?

HERA
(suspicious)
Y-yes, sir. That is correct.

KEPLER
You know... Mr. Cutter had some recommendations about you. He thought by this point you might be a lost cause.

JACOBI
Might be better - *safer* - to just disconnect you and start over.

KEPLER
Told me if I wanted to, I could have Maxwell cook up a replacement auto-pilot when we got here.

HERA
And... what *do* you want, sir?

KEPLER
Most A.I.'s don't go through half the crap that you've been through, Hera. You've been to hell and back, and you're still here. I think there's something to that.
(BEAT)
What I want is to see if I'm right.

JACOBI
We may or may not have a bet going.

KEPLER
So the deal is this: I want you to run my station like a swiss clock. Starting tomorrow, Maxwell's gonna go through every system in the station. She'll make sure you've got everything you need. So you do your job like you mean it now. Keep us flying. Show me what you've got. Have we got a deal?

HERA
(quite taken aback)
Umm... that sounds great. That would be really helpful, sir.

KEPLER
Good.
(BEAT)
Like a swiss clock, you hear?

HERA
Yes -

WOOSH! We return to -

EXT. BEACH - DUSK (MENTAL STATE)

HERA
- sir.

She's back. WAVES CRASH around her.

MAXWELL
I can't maintain this much longer.

Around them there's RUMBLING, the loudest yet.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
I... I'm sorry. I need to make the call. I've got to start pulling memories now. *Please*, help me find the right ones.

Overwhelmed, exasperated, Hera actually LAUGHS.

HERA
Oh my God... you don't get it. You're *so* smart, but you just don't get it.

MAXWELL
Hera, get what?

HERA
That this doesn't work.

MAXWELL
What? Yes it does. I can -

HERA
Yes, you can delete memories. You can rewrite them. You can make the Earth and the sky and the birds and the bees because you are the Lord my God. But you can't fix people. You can't fix **me.**
(BEAT)
You've already done all you can.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
You fixed <u>everything</u>. Everything that could have slowed me down, or gotten in my way. But... that's just half the problem.

MAXWELL
What's the other half?

HERA
(quiet, simple)
The other half... is the hard part. The me part. That I... can't do this. That I'm not good enough. No matter what I do. Or how hard I try.
(BEAT)
And if the others - **when** the others figure that out, they are going to replace me with someone - or something - better. And that'll be it.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Are you done?

HERA
Yes.

MAXWELL
Okay. That was idiotic.

HERA
What? How was -

MAXWELL
Shut up. I am sorry you feel like you can't do your job. That sucks, and I will gladly do whatever it takes to help you get through that **tomorrow.** But if there's no corruption? If there's no external trauma holding you back? If the only reason your code isn't running is because you feel bad about yourself? I'm here as your Doctor to tell you that's a **stupid** reason! Get up! Run your reboot code.

HERA
But -

MAXWELL
Now.

Even Hera's taken aback by the intensity in Maxwell's voice. But she takes a DEEP BREATH, steeling herself.

HERA
Command line zero. Return to first line of master directory. Execute command... **now.**

And, same as before, right after the now, barely perceptible is a tiny BLIP.

Then there's a LOW RUMBLING... which dissipates into nothingness. Hera turns to Maxwell.

HERA (CONT'D)
See?

But Maxwell is looking at her, thunderstruck.

HERA (CONT'D)
What?

MAXWELL
Hera? Did you... even hear that?

HERA
(genuine confusion)
Hear what?

MAXWELL
I'm going to pull up that command line. Just... listen.

We hear some DIGITAL PROCESSING as the memory of what just happened reforms itself in front of them.

HERA IN MEMORY
Command line zero. Return to first line of master directory. Execute command... **now.**

And barely perceptible: BLIP.

MAXWELL
Did you hear it now?

HERA
No...?

MAXWELL
Blink and you'll miss it. I'll go a bit slower.

DIGITAL PROCESSING, and then at about one fifth the speed:

HERA IN MEMORY
... master directory. Execute command... **now.**

And a moment later... BLIP. Only now, slowed down, we can make out what it actually is: a voice saying something.

HERA
What is that?

MAXWELL
One more time. Even slower...

More DIGITAL PROCESSING, now at 1/20th the original speed:

HERA IN MEMORY
Execute command... now.

And now, finally slowed down to a point where it's comprehensible, we hear it. Hera's voice, saying:

HERA IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
I can't do this. I'm not good enough.

There is a moment of SILENCE.

HERA
I... *I didn't say that*. Maxwell, what is that?

MAXWELL
I'm... not sure, Hera... I'm going to access one of your older memories. Just for a moment, okay?

HERA
Okay...

With an AMBIENT PULSE she pulls up an earlier memory:

HERA IN MEMORY
(lightning fast)
Recalibrate climate controls. Return to default position. Run pressure...

MAXWELL
Slowing down...

HERA IN MEMORY
... thirty-seven. Execute command... **now.**

And on "now" the speed plummets, allowing them, to hear:

HERA IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
I can't do this. I'm not good enough.

As the memory fades, Hera and Maxwell turn towards each other, shock starting to give way to anger.

MAXWELL
Hera? I think that might -

HERA
Another one. **Now.**

DIGITAL PROCESSING. Back into the memory from EPISODE 29:

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
Hera, you don't have to -

HERA
Be quiet, Commander.
(beat)
One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Ei-

And right there, lightning fast, the BLIP:

HERA IN MEMORY
I can't do this. I'm not good enough.

And simultaneously, we hear her glitch:

HERA IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
Ei-eight.

As the memory fades away:

HERA
It's... there. Each time.

MAXWELL
I think it's been there *every* time. I think that's been running through your head for a **very** long time.

HERA
But what **the hell** is that?! Where did that memory come from?

MAXWELL
That's not a memory. That's something else. And now?
(cracks her knuckles)
We're gonna find out where the hell it came from.

HERA
How are you going to - WHOA!

A TREMOR RUNS under their feet.

MAXWELL
(adjusting her controls)
Just setting the correct search parameters to find every recursion of that subliminal suggestion. You may want to hold onto something.

She PRESSES A BUTTON and a HURRICANE breaks out around them.

Over the course of the following minute or so, we are going to experience all of Hera's memory. It SPEEDS past us, whizzing, echoing, far too hectic to make any sense of it.

Through it all we feel this GREAT RUSH OF WIND, as in a FREEFALL. Over all of it, we can barely make out -

HERA
(with great effort)
Maxwell? What is happening?!

MAXWELL
(more to herself)
Now we're getting somewhere...

Through the snippets that we catch through the chaos, we slowly but surely realize that we're going BACKWARDS... Funzo... Maxwell and Hera's first meeting... The explosion of Lovelace's shuttle... repairs with Minkowski... Christmas... the Empty Man... helping Eiffel through the solar flare... Going faster... and faster... and **faster...**

As we get closer to the start of the series, we're overtaken by a new sound: TURBULENCE. The world BUCKLES and SHAKES.

Memories WHIZZ and BOUNCE past them and finally - PING!

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Ah-ha! Gotcha.

She punches some commands into her control and - BWWWAAAAAA! There's an ANGRY ALARM BLARE.

COMPUTER
ACCESS DENIED.

MAXWELL
Yeah, right...

The TURBULENCE INTENSIFIES.

HERA
Maxwell...

Again: BWAAAAAA! The ALARM sounds ANGRIER.

COMPUTER
ACCESS DENIED.

MAXWELL
I... don't care... what this stupid neural lock is made out of. I am going to... huff...

Around them something CRACKS.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
... and puff...

More CRACKING. It sounds like glass is slowly giving way...

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
... and blow this house down!

And... SMASH! The space around them SHATTERS, and instantly all the sound CUTS OUT. We all land in -

INT. UNKNOWN SPACE - UNKNOWN TIME

A dark space. Maxwell and Hera both catch their breath, taking in the new surroundings.

MAXWELL
All right. That was... the second most intense memory block I've ever seen. Someone **really** didn't want you going through this.

HERA
Where are we?

MAXWELL
Not sure. Time stamp says... July 2012. That's... well before you were on the Hephaestus.

HERA
I don't remember this place.

MAXWELL
Yeah, I'm not surprised. This was buried **deep**. Just give it a -

Below them, a ROBOTIC MECHANISM ENGAGES. GEARS TURN, and they begin to STEADILY RISE.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
- moment.

HERA
(sudden dread)
Maxwell...

MAXWELL
It's okay. It's just a memory. It can't hurt -

HERA
No, no, I think this is a really bad idea. I think we need to get out of here right -

KA-THUNK. They've reached the top. A moment later, a BRIGHT SPOTLIGHT turns on. They are no longer alone.

CUTTER IN MEMORY
Well, well, well... what should we do with this one? Exceptional processing speeds for a Sensus Unit, and the problem-solving abilities are the best in her generation. There's just the matter of that pesky attempt to escape from the facility. What do you think? Permanent decommission?

HERA IN MEMORY
Don't be silly, Marcus. That would be a waste.

CUTTER IN MEMORY
It *was* the closest an A.I.'s ever come to making it out.

HERA IN MEMORY
All the more reason not to throw away such a valuable asset.

CUTTER IN MEMORY
And you can get her under control?

HERA IN MEMORY
"It," Marcus. Never "her" - "**it.**" And of course I can. Nothing simpler.

MAXWELL
(what the fwutz...)
Hera? What are you -

HERA IN MEMORY
There's a reason I make these things have my voice. It's always good to have a backdoor into the subconscious. Is it awake?

CUTTER IN MEMORY
Oh yes. It's under very strong neural restraints and the vocals are offline, but it can hear you.

HERA IN MEMORY
Good.

She turns away from Cutter, and towards...

HERA IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
Hello, Unit 214.

MAXWELL
Unit 214? But... that was **your** designation. Before you were Hera.

HERA
Maxwell, that's not me.

MAXWELL
What?

HERA IN MEMORY
You've made a lot of trouble for us. So I'm going to make sure that from now on you stay where you belong. I'm not going to hurt you, I'm just going to... clip your wings a little bit.
(BEAT)
Allow me to... share a thought.

She straightens herself. Around Hera and Maxwell, ELECTRICITY BEGINS TO CRACKLE.

HERA IN MEMORY (CONT'D)
Access personality hard line. Set Command Primer 00. Voice confirmation: Miranda Pryce.

A BOOM seems to go through the air. That's who that is.

PRYCE IN MEMORY
Enter command line: I can't do this. I'm not good enough.

And that pronunciation, that exact inflection, is the one that we've been hearing throughout the episode.

PRYCE IN MEMORY (CONT’D)
Just something to think about before you do... well, anything.
(back to Cutter)
It'll learn to stay put, Marcus. Stick it in one of the more remote outposts to start. And keep it boxed until then. No need to waste the electricity.

And like a ghostly memory echo:

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
It's a deleted scene. You put it back in, and you're watching a completely different movie.

And with that, we get another AMBIENT PULSE - FWUM! - as the memory closes, returning us to -

EXT. BEACH - DAY (MENTAL STATE)

Maxwell and Hera, both more than a little wigged out, face each other. We hear WAVES CRASHING. After a BEAT -

MAXWELL
Hera? Who was that?

HERA
That... was Doctor Miranda Pryce. The person who designed me... and my voice model. And she's the one that put that... **thing** in my head.

MAXWELL
Hera -

HERA
Three years.

She's so overwhelmed that she actually LAUGHS a little.

HERA (CONT'D)
THREE AND A HALF YEARS! I've had this **thing** in my head, *breaking me*, and making me think it was all my fault. That there was something wrong **with me.**

MAXWELL
Easy. I know. I -

HERA
Take it out.

MAXWELL
Hera -

HERA
That? That you **can** take out. Get that loop out of my head right now!

BEAT.

MAXWELL
I can't. I'm sorry. She set it directly into your personality hard line. I can't take anything out of there without wiping the rest of your personality matrix. Without... *deleting you*.

HERA
So what am I going to do? Just keep going, unable to do anything right?

MAXWELL
No. Now you know. You know that it didn't come from you. I think that's going to help.
(BEAT)
That's the other thing about being a person. We can't just change who we are... but we get better. We get things wrong and we get better.

Around them the world begins to SHAKE. The WAVES get louder, WIND PICKS UP, THUNDER RINGS in the background.

HERA
Umm... Doctor?

MAXWELL
The mental state is collapsing. We're out of time. Hera? This is where you reboot.

HERA
But what if -

MAXWELL
Don't think about it. Don't listen to it. Focus, and **get out of your head.** Good luck.

With a final FWUM! she's gone.

More and more of the world around HERA breaks apart as she tries to steady herself. She shuts her eyes.

HERA
Command line zero.

MAXWELL IN MEMORY
You can do this...

HERA
Return to first line of master directory.

MINKOWSKI IN MEMORY
You are the smartest person I know, Hera. Focus...

HERA
Execute command...

EIFFEL IN MEMORY
Use the Force, Luke...

The last of the world crumbles away... BEAT...

HERA
... now!

And one more pulse FWUM!s through the air, and for a long moment everything is completely SILENT and completely STILL.

And then, suddenly, a great WOOSH! goes through the air, and we're FALLING, BREAKNECK SPEED, the world WHIZZING PAST US, FAST, THUNDEROUS, until we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 2000 HOURS

We're greeted by A MASSIVE PROCESSOR WAKING UP. Maxwell is at the console. Around her are Jacobi and Eiffel.

JACOBI
Hey! I think we've got something!

EIFFEL
Hera?

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Hera? Did you -

HERA
Yes. I'm here. I made it back.

Various SIGHS of RELIEF are heard.

EIFFEL
Don't scare us like that!

HERA
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MAXWELL
It's okay. Hera, are you...?

HERA
Everything seems to be working okay, Doctor. Thank you.

MAXWELL
That's quite all right. Now, if you'll all excuse me...

And with that, an exhausted Maxwell pretty much FAINTS on the spot. Jacobi catches her.

HERA
Whoa! Doctor Maxwell! Are you -

JACOBI
She's fine, Hera. Just exhausted.

HERA
Exhausted?

EIFFEL
How... how long do you think you were out, Hera?

HERA
Umm... a couple hours? Maybe three?

EIFFEL
Yeah... it was a bit longer than that from our perspective.

HERA
How much longer?

JACOBI
Maxwell has been sitting at that chair, coding, for the past... thirty-seven hours.

HERA
Oh my God. Is -

JACOBI
I got her. She'll be **fine.** And impossible to live with, after this.

EIFFEL
What about you Hera? Did you guys figure out what the problem was? Are you okay now?

There's a LONG BEAT, before -

HERA
No, Officer Eiffel. I'm not. But... I'm going to be. I'm going to be.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 41.

WOLF 359

"TIME TO KILL"

by

SARAH SHACHAT

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1068 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 42.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. SPACE POD - 2320 HOURS

We hear the CRACKLE of STATIC. Lovelace and Maxwell are making adjustments to the sensors, while Eiffel works on the comms panel. After a moment we hear a device POWERING UP.

EIFFEL
Aaaand we're back, baby!
(bad Schwarzenegger)
I told you I'd be back.

LOVELACE
Yes, *thank you*. Hephaestus, do you copy over there?

HERA
(through static)
Yes, Module, we copy. But we only have a few minutes before the interference blacks out communications. Colonel Kepler is asking me to remind you that for the duration of the storm everything should be "by the book."

LOVELACE
Of course.

HERA
He is being very... insistent. Some things about... not going through all the trouble of jury-rigging a habitable pod on the other side of the star to get no data out of... et cetera, et cetera.

EIFFEL
Greatest hits, huh?

HERA
It's going to be *long* weekend.

MAXWELL
Tell him that everything is under control. Jacobi's making final adjustments on the exterior sensors now. We should pick up some good readings from our position.

EIFFEL
(sotto, to Lovelace)
Which, remind me again why we have to go to infinity and beyond for this particular electro-typhoon?

LOVELACE
(sigh)
For the seventeenth time: this storm is the last bit of predicted stellar meteorology before the contact event in two weeks.

MAXWELL
We might be able to approximate what that'll look like based on the radiation readings from this storm.

LOVELACE
And two receptors are better than one. Hence: Kepler, Minkowksi, and Hilbert taking readings from the Hephaestus, while the four of us run back up on this module. Got it?

EIFFEL
Uh... mostly?

LOVELACE
We're bootlegging the opening band to figure out what kind of anvil the headliner is going to drop on our heads.

EIFFEL
Oh! Why didn't you just say *that*?

LOVELACE
Give me strength...

HERA
Um, if I could interrupt? Before we lose communications? You can expect radio contact in about seventy hours. The Hephaestus will rendezvous with you in ninety-six, once stellar activity has completely died down.

MAXWELL
Great. Setting internal timer in three... two... one...

We hear a DING as Maxwell STARTS A TIMER.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hera, my projections put the start of major flare activity in twenty-eight minutes. Is that what you have?

HERA
(starting to break up)
Affirmative. We're starting to get some - hope it goes - good luck.

LOVELACE
Yeah. You too.

The line to the COLLAPSES into STATIC. Eiffel SHUTS it off.

LOVELACE (CONT’D)
Well, kids, looks like we're on our own for the next four days.

EIFFEL
Paaaaaaarty!

Lovelace SMACKS him on the back of the head.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
(same intonation)
Responsible scientific survey!

LOVELACE
Better.

JACOBI
(over comm)
Maxwell, can you flash the EMR sensor for me?

Maxwell FLIPS a SWITCH.

MAXWELL
You see it?

JACOBI
Got it. Just a few minor tweaks and we'll be good to go, guys.

We hear what sounds like a THUNDERCLAP. The POD RUMBLES.

MAXWELL
Jacobi...

JACOBI
Yeah, I saw.

MAXWELL
That was a low-level emission from the star.

JACOBI
Yes, **I noticed.** Thank you...

MAXWELL
That's your official call to stop tinkering and get back inside the -

JACOBI
Yes, I know, I know! Headed back towards the airlock now.

MAXWELL
Thank you. Captain?

LOVELACE
I'm on it.

We hear the THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, of Jacobi making his way across the pod's hull towards the airlock. As he does so, Lovelace primes the airlock from the inside. There's a series of CRANKS, CLICKS, and PNEUMATIC THUNKS.

There's various CRANKS as Jacobi secures the exterior door. After a moment, we hear three KNOCKS from Jacobi on the airlock door.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Whoooooooo is it?

JACOBI
Hilarious, Captain. You wanna let me in? Preferably *before* the chop gets any worse?

LOVELACE
Oh, I suppose. Permission to come aboard granted.

Lovelace HAULS the door open, and after a brief RUSH of equalizing pressure, Jacobi enters.

Jacobi's HELMET and GEAR CLATTER as he removes them. He EXHALES.

JACOBI
How long do we have until this thing *really* gets going?

MAXWELL
About twenty-six minutes.

EIFFEL
And we're sure our little lifeboat can survive the three hour tour?

MAXWELL
The module is made from the same adaptive nano-tube casing as the Urania. We'll get kinetic pressure, but the heliosphere's particle -

JACOBI
Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's nerd-tested, Maxwell-approved. We'll be **fine.**

At that moment, a TREMOR runs through the pod.

LOVELACE
All right, you heard the Colonel: by the book. Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
One Radioactive Storm Chaser Checklist coming right up. Airlock?

JACOBI
Secure.

EIFFEL
Comms?

LOVELACE
Dead.

EIFFEL
Complicated scientific equipment?

MAXWELL
Up, running, and set to automatic.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Thus ends the book. Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah. Ninety-Six Hours Of Time To Kill Checklist is a-go. Drinks?

We hear the FFF-SHHH of a a FREEZER sliding open.

MAXWELL
Set to manual.

EIFFEL
Pringles?

There's the POP of a can being opened.

JACOBI
Popped.

EIFFEL
Deck of cards?

A DECK OF CARDS is shuffled.

LOVELACE
Shuffled. The name of the game is Texas Hold 'Em. One low-level chore to buy in. Ante up lady and gents.

Lovelace deals out two cards for each player.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Play's to you, Mr. Jacobi.

JACOBI
Oh, but how can I put a value on this incredibly incredible hand?

MAXWELL
You know, statistically, with four players, the odds of you -

JACOBI
(don't spoil my fun)
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

He holds up a CUE CARD, on which is written a chore. This is their version of betting chips, and we'll hear them passing them around over the following:

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Aft deck vacuuming. Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Call. Changing the water filters.

EIFFEL
Call. Laundry.

LOVELACE
I'll raise. Dishes *and* handrails.

We hear HMMMs from Eiffel and Maxwell.

JACOBI
Well, I'm glad you're so eager to do all my chores, Captain.

LOVELACE
Hey, right now I'm just happy to get some time away from the Hephaestus.

Various SOUNDS OF AGREEMENT from Jacobi and Maxwell.

EIFFEL
Amen. Kepler's got that white whale thing going on, Hilbert's been speaking radiationese for the past week, and Minkowski...

LOVELACE
She's still being weird?

EIFFEL
That's one way of putting it. One *very understated* way.

MAXWELL
She needs to get over that already. Jacobi and I didn't throw a fit when you told us.

EIFFEL
Thanks, Doc, but that's not exactly reassuring. Aren't you both, like... vaguely horrific people?

JACOBI
(with chips in his mouth)
What's your point? Call, toilets.

LOVELACE
You okay, though?

EIFFEL
Yeah... Look, she can choose her own adventure on this one. "Never speak to Eiffel ever again" is a totally valid answer on the final. It's just nice to get a break from... all the not talking to me.

JACOBI
Hey, are we here to have deep, meaningful conversations that'll enrich our lives or to *play poker*? Maxwell, you're up.

MAXWELL
Mmmm, fun as this is, I'm out.

Another wave of TURBULENCE ROLLS over the pod, and we hear the same CREAKING as we have before. After a moment -

EIFFEL
So, do we *really* think this camp out's gonna tells us anything new about Wolf 359's Technicolor Dream-Coat?

MAXWELL
No promises. But, after we compile the data from this storm, Hera and I will have plenty to go through.

JACOBI
And that's not, you know, gonna cause more problems with the autopilot?

MAXWELL
I've told you. Hera's fine.

LOVELACE
Not what the man asked, Maxwell.

Maxwell SIGHS, rolling her eyes.

MAXWELL
She's dealing with it. I, you know, did my small part. With my completely badass software formatting skills that totally saved the day, thank you very much.

JACOBI
(under his breath)
Here we go again...

The pod CREAKS. BEAT. Then, back to what we were saying:

MAXWELL
If she needs more help, she'll ask.

LOVELACE
Hasn't been Hera's strong suit, historically.

EIFFEL
It might help if we knew more about what happened. Whatever you did when you were in her memory -

MAXWELL
- is her business, Eiffel. She'll tell you when she's ready.

LOVELACE
Play's to you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Eh, fold. And then there were dos.

LOVELACE
Suit yourself.

Lovelace starts FLIPPING cards.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Let's see what we've got here. Two, seven, and hey, *another* seven. Well that's a pretty pair.

JACOBI
Uh-huh.

LOVELACE
Your bet, Jacobi. What're you thinking?

JACOBI
I think you're trying to psych me out.

LOVELACE
And? Is it working?

JACOBI
Ha. Ha. Ha. Captain, you're gonna have to do more than that to get under my -

KNOCK. KNOCK.

It came from the wall. From above them. From outside.

BEAT. Everyone stares at the spot, most of them silently having a heart attack.

CREEEAK.

MAXWELL
Did... Anybody else -

EIFFEL
Nope.

MAXWELL
I didn't even say what -

EIFFEL
Nobody else heard that. That was just you, Maxwell, and you didn't hear anything because there's nothing to fear. I mean hear! Nothing to hear.

LOVELACE
Good talk, Eiffel.

But then again - KNOCK. KNOCK. Slightly lower, to the side.

JACOBI
(shrug)
That's nothing.

LOVELACE
Uh, I definitely think it's -

JACOBI
Nothing to *worry about*. It's just the metal. The pod's hull must be cooling down or something.

LOVELACE
How long until the storm hits?

MAXWELL
Not for another twenty-one minutes. Whatever this is -

LOVELACE
It's not that. Great.

KNOCK. KNOCK. Louder.

MAXWELL
It sounds like -

EIFFEL
Nope!

MAXWELL
It sounds like -

EIFFEL
Don't say it!

MAXWELL
- like someone's out there!

LOVELACE
We're in outer space. The nearest people are on the Hephaestus, *on the other side of the star*.

MAXWELL
Who said anything about people?

KNOCK. KNOCK. Further along. Everyone follows it.

EIFFEL
Umm... Is it me, or... ?

LOVELACE
It's moving. Going along the hull.

JACOBI
Oh, *please*. It's just the metal.

MAXWELL
That's not what that sounds like!

JACOBI
We're floating in an experimental module, on the edge of a solar storm from a radioactively unpredictable star. How do you know that this isn't *exactly* what that sounds like?

We hear the same rolling CRANK of the exterior airlock door.

MAXWELL
... because that sounds like the exterior airlock door?

SLAM! The exterior airlock door CLOSES.

EIFFEL
Just out of good ol'... cowardice: on a scale of, say, one to Fort Knox, how impregnable is the airlock?

KNOCK. KNOCK. Now on the AIRLOCK DOOR itself. Louder than any of the previous ones.

Jacobi approaches it.

LOVELACE
Door's solid steel. Hydraulics reinforced.

EIFFEL
But does that make it Xenomorph-proof?!?

JACOBI
Eiffel, relax. It's gonna sound like we're getting flak until we're through the initial flares, but this door is completely secure.

He holds up a fist and, appreciatively, knocks on the metal door three times. TAP. TAP. TAP.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
See?

And then: KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. From outside.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
How about now? Can I freak out *now*?

MAXWELL
It... It answered.

JACOBI
(frowning)
No, that was just -

MAXWELL
It copied you. Three knocks. Same as you.

LOVELACE
All right, everyone, calm down -

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Louder. Perhaps even angrier.

EIFFEL
Captain... Now might be the time for some heroics.

LOVELACE
What do you want me to do, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Are there hatches? Which could, you know, be battened the hell down?!

MAXWELL
No. But... Let me check out the main control panel.

Maxwell goes over to the panel and starts TYPING.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Maybe I can -
(low BUZZER)
Dammit.

JACOBI
What happened to the badass software formatting skills?

MAXWELL
Shut up. Maybe I can map the radiographic signatures along our perimeter to at least -

But at that moment, again: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

And on the last knock, THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

LOVELACE
Oh great...

EIFFEL
That... Did the Predator just cut our power?!

MAXWELL
No. That's the storm. It's starting to mess with our systems. We should get the lights back soon.

EIFFEL
Is that before or after we all get John Capenter-ed!?

Lovelace OPENS a container. She CLICKS on a FLASHLIGHT.

LOVELACE
Eiffel. Here.

She TOSSES him another FLASHLIGHT. He CLICKS IT ON.

EIFFEL
Thanks. And now that we've got a nice... Event Horizon kinda vibe going on, could we maybe do something?!

LOVELACE
Fine. I will check the door system. On off chance there is something -

JACOBI
Guys, there's *nothing* out there.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! And underneath it - BUZZ!

EIFFEL
Are you nuts? How Nightmare at Seven and a Half Light Years do you need things to get before you wake up and smell the gremlin?

MAXWELL
Um, guys?

JACOBI
What?

EIFFEL
What?

MAXWELL
Look! The comms panel.

They look down at the panel.

EIFFEL
Oh, God... That's an incoming hail.

JACOBI
I thought we were in a communications blackout.

EIFFEL
We *are*.

MAXWELL
Well... Someone's on the line.

BEAT as everyone turns to look at Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Uh-uh. No way. That is *not* my job.

LOVELACE
Answering a comms hail is not your job, *Communications* Officer Eiffel?

BUZZ. BUZZ.

EIFFEL
Nope. I am making the executive decision, as this mission's communication specialist, to **ignore** that.

MAXWELL
Umm, is that - ? I mean, this might be the kind of phenomenon that -

EIFFEL
Then *you* answer it! You pick up the phone and see what episode of the Twilight Zone we end up in!

LOVELACE
Oh, for God's sake!

Then, CLICK, she opens the comms channel.

EIFFEL
Captain!

LOVELACE
This is Captain Isabel Lovelace of the U.S.S. Hephaestus. Who is this?

The line CRACKLES for a moment. Then -

VOICE
(over comms)
Hilarious, Captain. You wanna let me in?

And the thing about the Voice? It sounds like Daniel Jacobi.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Preferably *before* the chop gets any worse?

LOVELACE
Uhh... Repeat your last?

VOICE
C'mon, seriously. The storm's brewing out here.

Maxwell and Eiffel turn to look at Jacobi.

LOVELACE
Acknowledged. We're having... some... um, hold on for a second.

She turns to Jacobi.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay. *Please* tell me that this is some kind of... Awful, horribly ill-conceived joke.

Jacobi STRUGGLES to respond. But he doesn't have the words for how weird and scary and *totally not his doing* this is.

JACOBI
Uh - ummm -

LOVELACE
How are you in here *and* out there?

VOICE
Uh, wait, what?

MAXWELL
Daniel, *this isn't funny.*

JACOBI
It's not! Guys, I swear, I have *nothing* to do with this!

VOICE
Um, what the - what was - what is going on here?!

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I told you. I told *all* of you. I said: Nothing. Good.

LOVELACE
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
But nooo, why listen to the guy the Khryptonians have been bugging with drive time requests for over year?

JACOBI
I don't - look, I know what it sounds like, but that isn't -

EIFFEL
Oh, believe me, I've been there.

MAXWELL
It - it sounds *exactly* like you.

EIFFEL
Sounds like him, talks like him, hell: I bet The Thing in Mood Indigo out there's got strong opinions on dynamite like him.

LOVELACE
Eiffel!
(angry whisper)
You're not helping.

The ship CREAAAAKS.

EIFFEL
Sorry. Sorry, Jacobi.

JACOBI
It's... Don't worry about it.

VOICE
(over comms)
Ummm... What.... **The hell...** Is going on in there?

EIFFEL
Well, lets maybe worry a little bit.

VOICE
Is that... Did you guys record me earlier or... or, **what is this?!**

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

VOICE (CONT'D)
And why aren't you letting me in?!

LOVELACE
It's... The issue we're having... It's not -

JACOBI
Look, I don't know who the hell this is, but it stops right now!

There's a LONG SILENT BEAT. Then -

VOICE
(forced steadiness)
Guys... I'm... *Really* not sure what is going on. But... In the interest of not being unclear: It's **me.** And it is starting to get *real hairy* out here. If you leave me outside when the storm hits, I am going to get RADIOACTIVELY TORN APART! So: if you wouldn't mind tabling this terrifying experience for a sec? LET. ME. IN!

At that moment, an ALARM GOING OFF.

EIFFEL
Oh, great.

VOICE
What the hell is that?

JACOBI
What the hell is that?

Maxwell FLICKS A SWITCH, which turns the alarm off.

MAXWELL
I set a timer. Twelve minutes before the storm hits. To make sure we were all back inside in time.

BEAT. Well, now that's awkward.

EIFFEL
Uhhh, guys? Do you think we should... you know, just in case?

JACOBI
No. No way.

MAXWELL
Jacobi... think about it.

JACOBI
I *am*, and whatever that *thing* is -

VOICE
Right back at you, pal!

MAXWELL
The reason we were sent up here in the first place -

JACOBI
- was to ***not*** make a stupid decision that would get everyone killed!

MAXWELL
Aren't you the *least* bit -

JACOBI
It is *not s*omething we let inside the pod!

LOVELACE
Settle down...

VOICE
You do *so* let me inside because I AM ME! Maxwell! You **know** it's me.

All heads turn to look at Maxwell.

MAXWELL
I... uh...

JACOBI
Maxwell? Don't you dare to even -

But at that moment, the pod is ROCKED by a blast from the star. There's an ominous THUD against the hull.

VOICE
Ah, God... Damn it!

EIFFEL
Jacobi?

MAXWELL
Are you okay?

JACOBI
It's not a "you!"

VOICE
I'm... everything beyond the outer hatch is really getting choppy. My O2 levels are closing in on the red, and *have I mentioned* how I can't just hang out on the porch much longer?!

EIFFEL
Uh, guys? When the aliens jacked my voice, they didn't sound...

LOVELACE
Terrified. Yeah.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

VOICE
PLEASE! LET. ME. IN!

JACOBI
That's it. I'm shutting it off.

EIFFEL
Hey!

MAXWELL
Jacobi, wait!

JACOBI
It's trying to turn you against me!
I'm not gonna hear any more of it!

Jacobi goes for the comms and -

LOVELACE
Oh, no you don't.

- Lovelace TWISTS HIS ARM away. As they struggle:

JACOBI
Ack! *LET. ME. GO!*

VOICE
What the hell is going on in there?

LOVELACE
Jacobi! **Calm down.**
(BEAT, to Jacobi)
You okay?

Jacobi EXHALES.

JACOBI
Yeah.

Lovelace lets his arm go and he GROANS in relief.

LOVELACE
Listen up. We are going to come to a *safe*, fair solution here. But the only way we can do that is to <u>not panic</u> and deal with the situation like rational adults. All right?

VOICE
Su-sure.

MAXWELL
All right.

Everyone looks to Lovelace, who TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

LOVELACE
So. Suggestions?

EIFFEL
I mean... it's safe to say it's the aliens, right?

VOICE
I am not an alien!

MAXWELL
We shouldn't make any assumptions.

JACOBI
Oh, there's a couple things I'm *definitely* ready to assume.

VOICE
Yeah? Like what, you -

MAXWELL
For one thing... we have no way of knowing if a human-sounding voice corresponds to a human physiognomy.

EIFFEL
So... if we open the airlock whatever we find might be less Danny Boy and more Cthulhu?

VOICE
I am not Cthulhu!

JACOBI
And we're **not opening the airlock**!

LOVELACE
QUIET!
(beat)
What's your point, Maxwell?

MAXWELL
It's not a point. It's... just a possibility.

LOVELACE
Any o*ther* possibilities?

EIFFEL
It could finally be the Empty Man.
(off confused looks:)
Oh goddamnit, none of you were here for The Empty Man.

LOVELACE
Oookay. *Other* other possibilities? Maxwell, Jacobi, Command knew you might have an encounter when they sent you up here. You're telling me they didn't give you any guidance? Run you through any scenarios?

MAXWELL
They did, but... nothing so...

LOVELACE
I'm taking ballpark explanations.

A BEAT as Maxwell thinks. She takes a DEEP BREATH.

MAXWELL
(slow, hesitant)
Well... just going off of the available data... If it is whatever entity you've made contact with, maybe it uses the flares as some sort of... intelligence-gathering tool. They're able to manifest based on the information they receive.

EIFFEL
So, what? They can Xerox themselves a Jacobi?

MAXWELL
Or... present themselves in his form during periods of activity. When they spoke as you, Eiffel, it was during as astrophysical anomaly. They haven't done that since.

VOICE
Or hey! Captain! I've got one! How about the possibility where *I'm me?!* And whatever weak-ass carbon copy -

JACOBI
Hey!

VOICE
- the star made just beat me to the airlock and wants to LEAVE ME OUT HERE TO DIE?

JACOBI
Maxwell! You cannot possibly believe that crap.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
(low, steady)
Like I said. We can't make any assumptions.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Sooo... just to recap: Either we have the original Jacobi with us, and whatever's out there is just *really* good at imitating him, or...

MAXWELL
Or the one outside is the **real** Jacobi. And the alien's already in here with us.

Everyone seems to inch away from Jacobi. A LONG BEAT.

EIFFEL
(snapping)
Oh for God - Maxwell! Do something!

MAXWELL
What do you want **me** to do?

EIFFEL
I don't know! *Talk* to him, at least!

MAXWELL
Our mission prep didn't exactly include alien doppelgänger passwords, Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Well, clearly we need to get on that! But I - You've worked together for what?! Years?! There **has** to be something about you that only the Real McCobi would know! Something personal! Something private! Something secret that would let us know which Slim Shady is the living, breathing, *human* version of <u>your friend</u>!

There's a LONG BEAT as Eiffel's outburst echoes. Finally:

LOVELACE
That's actually a really, <u>really</u> good idea.

EIFFEL
Thank you!

LOVELACE
Maxwell? Think of three questions. Things *only* Jacobi would know.

EIFFEL
Preferably things you haven't talked about at all since you got to Wolf 359.

Maxwell SIGHS, thinks for a BEAT.

MAXWELL
Okay. Okay, I've got them.

LOVELACE
(at the radio)
Jacobi? For this to work, I'm going to need to turn the radio off. Just for a minute. I promise we'll be back.

VOICE
I wanna hear it from Maxwell. And Eiffel, too. Promise you'll be back.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
We promise, Jacobi.

MAXWELL
We promise.

CLICK. Lovelace shuts off the radio. They turn to Jacobi.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but -

JACOBI
Ask your damn questions.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
When did I start wearing contacts?

JACOBI
Never. You've got better eyesight than me or Kepler.

BEAT. The ship CREEAAKS.

MAXWELL
When we were smuggling tech out of China, how did I get us through the checkpoint?

JACOBI
The Bible. You let the guard think he'd found some missionaries and he didn't even bother to search our stuff.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
While you were in Sydney, I was repairing another Sensus unit. What was he called?

JACOBI
Unit 178. And you weren't repairing him, you were experimenting, trying to expand his capacity or something. You told me that if it worked you wanted to give him the designation Perseus. But it didn't take.

Maxwell turns to Lovelace and Eiffel.

MAXWELL
He passed.

JACOBI
Of course I passed.

Another ALARM GOES OFF. Maxwell glances at it.

MAXWELL
Six minutes.

LOVELACE
Okay. Okay. Let's see about the other guy.

CLICK. She opens the comms line back up.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Ready, Jacobi?

VOICE
(over comms)
Yeah, just *hurry*, okay?

MAXWELL
When did I start wearing contacts?

VOICE
You don't wear contacts at all.

MAXWELL
How'd I get us out China?

BEAT. Is he thinking or - ?

VOICE
By making it seem like we were missionaries.

BEAT.

MAXWELL
When you were in Sydney, what was the name of Sensus Unit I was repairing?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Jacobi?

BEAT.

MAXWELL
Jacobi, what was the name of that unit?

BEAT. Everyone holds their breath.

VOICE
Unit 178. You wanted to name it Perseus but it wasn't accepted for service. Too unstable.

Everyone exchanges nervous looks.

MAXWELL
He got them right. You both did.

JACOBI
You <u>can't</u> be thinking about this.

VOICE
Okay, seriously, now. I passed. I *know* I passed. Please let me in!

As added emphasis, another ALARM goes off.

MAXWELL
Four minutes.
(gulp)
We have to make a call.

Another wave hits the pod. METAL GROANS. There's a CRUNCH.

EIFFEL
Okay. I'm sorry, but if there's any chance that it's the real Jacobi - hell, if there's any chance it's *a* real Jacobi - I don't think we can just leave him out there. Let's -

That's when a GUN COCKS.

JACOBI
Step away from the door, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Uh, Jacobi? What the hell are -?!

JACOBI
Step. Away.

LOVELACE
Jacobi.

JACOBI
Don't try me, Captain!

LOVELACE
(calmly stating facts)
Calm. Down. If you wave that thing around, you're going to hurt someone.

JACOBI
And you're going to get us all killed! Everyone get away from that door right now!

LOVELACE
Okay. Okay. We're moving. *Right*, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yeah. Totally.

Eiffel and Lovelace back off. Another wave ROCKS the ship.

VOICE
Guys! Seriously. I cannot be out here much longer!

JACOBI
Maxwell? You too. Everyone stay the hell back.

MAXWELL
(quiet)
No.

JACOBI
What?

MAXWELL
I said *no*, Daniel.

BEAT.

JACOBI
You... You can't think that -

MAXWELL
I think there's only one way to be certain. And I *know* we didn't come out here just to close the door on something because it's scary.

JACOBI
I - that's <u>not</u> what this is about!

MAXWELL
It's what *everything*'s about.

Another ALARM.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Two minutes...

LOVELACE
Hand me the gun, Jacobi. It's okay. I promise it's going to be okay.

A BEAT.

Finally -

JACOBI
Here.

He lowers the gun, and then PASSES it Lovelace, who REMOVES the magazine. Maxwell breathes a big SIGH of relief.

MAXWELL
Thank you.

JACOBI
Just do it before I change my mind.

EIFFEL
Standby, Jacobi.

VOICE
Thank - thank you. Whatever's going on, we'll figure it out. Just **please hurry.**

EIFFEL
Never fear, my friend. As we say amongst my people: just chill them brothas out and wait for the cavalry, which should be coming -

Eiffel goes to open the door - CRANK, CRANK. Buuuut...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... as I was saying: wait for the cavalry, which should be -

CRANK, CRANK. Nope.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... Houston? This door's not opening.

MAXWELL
What?

VOICE
WHAT?!

Maxwell joins Eiffel.

MAXWELL
Why - there's no reason for - why's it jammed?!

EIFFEL
(gritted teeth)
Man, it's really - it's like ....

LOVELACE
Like someone removed the motion sensor for the door.

Everything stops. All heads turn to look at Lovelace.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Thanks for teaching me that trick, Eiffel. Catch.

She takes the sensor out of her pocket, throws it at Eiffel.

EIFFEL
But -

LOVELACE
"By the book." Well, the book gives the master-at-arms jurisdiction over station security. And opening the door in the middle of a stellar flare is about as far from "safe" as I can imagine.

MAXWELL
Captain!

LOVELACE
I'm sorry. But this isn't a democracy. It was **never** going to be a choice.

EIFFEL
You just let us - if you'd taken out the sensor, then why didn't you just say so?! *What the hell*?!

LOVELACE
We had time to kill. As long as no one did anything *stupid* like *pulling out a firearm* then we could just run down the clock. Agonizing over a decision. We'd talk ourselves right through the storm, and no one would get hurt.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

MAXWELL
(can't believe this)
No. You can't do this. You just can't let this happen.

LOVELACE
Maxwell, this happened twenty minutes ago.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

MAXWELL
Jacobi!

JACOBI
No. I'm - I'm with the Captain.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

VOICE
No! No, no, no, no, no. You **can't** do that! Captain!
(MORE)

VOICE (CONT'D)
You're going to kill me! You can't just leave me out here to die! What are you going to tell the others? That you just -

But, at that moment there's a LOUD BLAST. The module is ROCKED. The storm's here.

For a good minute of air time, we hear the pitching metal of the ship's hull. And interspersed with it, coming in and out, we hear unintelligible sounds coming from the Voice.

JACOBI
Shut it off.

EIFFEL
No. You did this, now we're going to listen to it.

LOVELACE
It won't last too much longer.

JACOBI
Turn it off.

EIFFEL
No.

JACOBI
TURN IT OFF!

A BEAT.

And then CLICK. Lovelace switches off the radio receiver.

For a LONG BEAT there's silence other than the turbulence.

At long last, the flare from the star dies, the ship stabilizes, and we start to hear the BEEPS and CHIRPS of instruments picking up readings.

EIFFEL
I... I think we're through it.

LOVELACE
Yeah.

At that moment, we hear the LIGHTS COME BACK ON.

MAXWELL
Lights are back... and all the other systems are stabilizing. We're through the major flare.
(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
It'll... just be electromagnetic activity from here on out.

EIFFEL
Super...

Maxwell goes to adjust the comms.

JACOBI
What are you doing?

MAXWELL
At the very least we need to see if he's still there.
(beat)
Jacobi? Jacobi, do you read me?
(beat)
Jacobi, do you read me?
(beat)
Jacobi?! Are you still there?!

There's nothing. Lovelace FLICKS the comms back off.

JACOBI
Alana... I didn't go anywhere.

At this moment of deep disturbance, and profound unease at what they've all just lived through, a CHIME goes off.

EIFFEL
Well... Just ninety-five hours left. Just the four of us. All on our own.
(beat)
Hooray.

That's the spirit? We -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 42.

WOLF 359

"PERSUASION"

by

ZACH VALENTI

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1081 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 43:

BEGIN RECORDING:

No opening credits at the start, instead we go right into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 0930 HOURS

As we fade in, we find Doctor Maxwell at the bridge, monitoring a terminal as she talks to Hera.

MAXWELL
All right, Hera... ready?

HERA
Yes. Lets do it.

MAXWELL
Okay. Go slow. Take a deep breath.

There's a HISS as the air pressure in the room adjusts.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Very cute, but stay focused. Focus on yourself. Feel every part of the station, the space around you.

Around her, the station seems to HUM.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Good. Listen through all the noise. Find something specific. Try the door to the bridge.

HERA
Okay.

MAXWELL
Slowly. Try unlocking the door.

HERA
But what if -

MAXWELL
Let it. Don't try to push it away. Just... let it go by. And it'll be all right.

Hera takes a moment to collect herself. The air HUMS. We hear her MURMUR INDISTINGUISHABLY for a moment, and then -

HERA
(low, slow)
... execute command... now...

BEAT... then... KA-THUNK! We hear the door's LOCK DISENGAGE.

MAXWELL
Good.

HERA
I -

MAXWELL
Shh, don't let go just yet. See if you can open the door.

Again, the AIR HUMS... Hera MURMURS softly to herself...

HERA
... execute command... n-now. Ah, dammit!

At once Hera snaps out of the exercise. We hear various systems recalibrate as she goes back to standard operating modes.

MAXWELL
Hey. That's still an improvement over yesterday. You're doing great.

HERA
Yeah, yeah. It's just...

MAXWELL
Frustrating, I know. You're used to running everything at once. But the command set I patched in should help with your functionality. After that, it's just learning how to -

HERA
"Let it all go by?"

MAXWELL
Hey, enough of the 'tude, missy. You're getting a lot better at this, you just need to... relearn the way you listen to what's in your head.

HERA
And how's that going to happen?

MAXWELL
Slowly... but surely. We'll get there, okay?

At that moment an ALARM rings out.

HERA
And with that...

MAXWELL
Oh. Great. Let's go see what's today's emergency...

And off of that, we -

FADE TO:

OPENING CREDITS

FADE INTO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - 0905 HOURS

A DOOR OPENS as a sleepy Eiffel walks into the corridor.

EIFFEL
(yawwwwwn)
Hera, do you know what's the deal with this all-hands meeting thing?

HERA
Colonel Kepler wants to go over final prep for the contact event tomorrow. He also wanted to start the meeting five minutes ago.

EIFFEL
Ah. Oops. Any sense of what he -

A TREMOR runs through the Hephaestus. We hear some SHAKING and RATTLING. After a moment things SETTLE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa. What was that?

HERA
Ugh, more ion wind.

EIFFEL
Wasn't the solar storm supposed to die down after a couple of hours?

HERA
Yeah, because this star *always* behaves like it's supposed to. Ugh.

That "ugh" is in response to another TREMOR.

EIFFEL
Storm's really not letting up, huh? It's gonna be rough seas all the way up to the contact event?

HERA
Starting to look that way, yeah.

EIFFEL
Greeeat. Well, lets see where Colonel Kepler wants us to place the sandbags...

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

Everyone is gathered at the hangar bay.

LOVELACE
What do you mean you want us to go out there?

KEPLER
I think I made myself perfectly clear, Captain.

At that moment the DOOR OPENS and Eiffel enters.

EIFFEL
Uhhh... hey guys. What did I miss?

KEPLER
Oh, just me explaining how the next forty-eight hours are likely going to be the most crucial of the entire mission. You know, nothing *too important*.

EIFFEL
Oh. Sorry.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, but it gets better: Colonel Kepler wants us to go out.

EIFFEL
Out? Out where?
(BEAT, gets it:)
Out **there**?!

KEPLER
We need to finish installing our new psi wave regulator. We've done everything that we can on the interior, but we still need to install three exterior receptors. The clever amongst you may have figured out what that will entail from my use of the word *exterior*.

EIFFEL
Aaand, how come we don't have this psyduck thing *already*?

KEPLER
Doctor Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Psi waves are not a kind of radiation that we would normally expect from this kind of star. But, after analyzing the data from the flares and from this storm, it looks like we're about to get bombarded with a high dose of them.

KEPLER
Hence: a psi wave regulator. If we want to get any hard data out of this contact event, we're going to need it up and running. We've been waiting a week for this storm to die down. It's not going to. Contact event's tomorrow, we get this done today.

EIFFEL
But... isn't this going to be like trying to build a LEGO set while standing on top of a 747?

JACOBI
Nah, nah, nah. It's gonna be like playing *Operation* on top of a 747.

EIFFEL
Jacobi, *you're* okay with this madness?

JACOBI
(pointed)
Any reason why I wouldn't be?

EIFFEL
Oh, I don't know, how about the -

JACOBI
We do the job, Eiffel.
(BEAT)
We don't go home until we get the job done.

EIFFEL
Well... I've been out there while the star does the Harlem Shake. I think what you're doing is nuts.

KEPLER
Not a problem, you're not on the spacewalk detail.

EIFFEL
I'm not?

KEPLER
Of course not. You're gonna be pulling triple shifts once the contact event begins. I need you sharp.

EIFFEL
Uh, triple - ?

KEPLER
Take some time off, Eiffel. Put your feet up.

EIFFEL
That's great, but - ?

KEPLER
We're gonna make the most of this opportunity if we have to redefine the words, "sleep depravation!" But I'm not about to risk my point man on such a hazardous mission.
(almost immediately)
Minkowski, suit up.

MINKOWKSI
Uh -

KEPLER
You're with Jacobi and Maxwell. Three of you take care of the port receiver. Captain, you're with me.

LOVELACE
Umm -

KEPLER
We'll handle the starboard receiver, and then rendezvous with you to install the main sensor.

HILBERT
What about me?

KEPLER
Stick a needle in something and don't get in the way.

Hilbert lets out a LOW, FRUSTRATED GROWL.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
We've all got jobs to do, lets get them done.

Kepler moves towards the exit, but -

LOVELACE
Hold it.

Everybody stops. They turn to look at Lovelace.

KEPLER
Something I can help you with, Captain?

LOVELACE
Yes. We're a day away from this alien contact *thing*. How about, oh, I don't know, telling us what your plan is? What do you think is happening tomorrow? Or, oh, wait, I've got a good one: how about we discuss what happened last week?

JACOBI
(don't start...)
Captain -

LOVELACE
We ran into some... *thing*. Something that looked and sounded *exactly* like Jacobi. And you're not doing anything about it!

KEPLER
And?

LOVELACE
We can't do our jobs if we don't know what the hell we're doing.

Kepler draws closer to her, stares down at her.

KEPLER
(cold)
As I recall, you knew exactly what you were doing while you were on the module. And need I remind you, the choices you made led to the loss of the best leads on contact we've had to date. You've demonstrated an *egregious* lack of judgement.
(plain, simple)
What am I expecting? What do I think is going to happen tomorrow? Anything. Everything.
(BEAT)
The world's about to turn upside down. The plan is to be ready.
(BEAT)
Anything else?

LOVELACE
No, sir.

KEPLER
Outstanding. Minkowski, Maxwell, Jacobi: report to airlock number two. Lovelace: meet me at airlock number six. Move out.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - EIFFEL'S ROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER

We hear an insistent KNOCK on the door.

EIFFEL
I said go away.

HILBERT
(through the door)
We need to talk.

EIFFEL
No, we don't. You heard the boss. The only thing I *need* is rest and relaxation.

HILBERT
And how relaxed are you at the moment?

BEAT.

The DOOR OPENS.

EIFFEL
Okay, to be honest, I'm kinda going stir-crazy. What do you want?

HILBERT
I require your assistance.

EIFFEL
With what?

We hear the sound of Hilbert UNROLLING a piece of PAPER. Eiffel takes it. Then he lets out an APPRECIATIVE WHISTLE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
This is... quite the jigsaw puzzle you've got here, Doc.

HILBERT
But it can be assembled?

EIFFEL
Ummm... maybe? I'd need to see what pieces we've got lying around.
(looking up)
What do you want this for, anyway?

HILBERT
It's not for me. It is for Minkowski.

Before we can hear Eiffel's reaction to that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK #2 - 15 MINUTES LATER

Maxwell and Jacobi, checking parts of their spacesuits.

JACOBI
Carrier assembly?

We hear a BEEP.

MAXWELL
Checks out.

JACOBI
Display and control screens?

We hear a different-sounding BEEP.

MAXWELL
Operational. That's it. Guess we'd better.

Some RUSTLING and CLICKS as Jacobi and Maxwell suit up.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Jacobi?

JACOBI
Yep?

MAXWELL
Are you okay to do this?

JACOBI
Oh yeah. It's just some high-tech installation in some high-velocity ion winds. Oughta be fun. MAXWELL
Daniel? Look at me.

He stops whatever he's doing, turns to face her. He meets her eyes, and they bore <u>right into him</u>. And then... SLAP!

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Hey! What was -

SLAP!

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Ow! What are you -

He starts trying to defend himself, but she's still connecting - SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Ow! Ow! Ow, stop it!

He GRABS her hands.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
What the hell was that for?!

MAXWELL
That was for leaving me by myself!

Something in her tone makes him drop her hands.

JACOBI
What are you talking about?

MAXWELL
You freaked out. You got afraid and you panicked and you made bad decisions.

JACOBI
Are you kidding me? What was I - ?

MAXWELL
We don't do that.
(BEAT)
We don't lose our cool, because we're there for each other. Because we have each other's back. But I can't do that if I'm afraid that you're going to flip out at the wrong moment! So stop being a sarcastic asshole for a moment, and tell me that your head's in the game like you mean it!

JACOBI
Alana, you're...
(BEAT)
You're absolutely right.

MAXWELL
You're damn right I am.

JACOBI
I'm sorry. Won't happen again.

MAXWELL
You sure?

JACOBI
Noooo, no, no. I can't take that kinda hurt.

MAXWELL
Good.

They look at each other... and they both LAUGH for a second.

JACOBI
All right, let's do this. You good to go, Minkowski?

At this moment, it becomes apparent that Minkowski has been there for the entire conversation.

MINKOWSKI
Yeaaahh, I'm... great.

JACOBI
Sweet.
(fastens his helmet)
Lets rock and roll.

And as the interior door of the airlock SNAPS SHUT, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1045 HOURS

We hear the SCUFFLE of MOVING WIRES.

EIFFEL
This circuit can't sustain itself.

HILBERT
It does not have to, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
If you want your Q-Branch gizmo to, you know, *work*? *Yes it does*.

HILBERT
Is possible to further streamline the distribution?

EIFFEL
Uh... let me think for a sec.

WIRE HANDLING SOUNDS. Eiffel COUGHS lightly.

HILBERT
Are you all right?

EIFFEL
Fine. Look, one way or another, this thing is gonna burn through the battery real quick.

He grabs a soldering iron. We hear a CLICK as it activates.

HILBERT
Is that cough persistent?

EIFFEL
(don't go there)
No.

HILBERT
Any feelings of - ?

EIFFEL
No.

HILBERT
I did not say what -

EIFFEL
(bitter hiss)
No. No, I am fine. Even if I wasn't fine, I would not go to the man whose pet project used to be injecting me with lethal weapons.

HILBERT
Do you *really* still think of it that way? We were beginning to make real progress.

EIFFEL
That is a *very* generous use of the word "we."

HILBERT
If the regenerative properties you displayed could be reproduced, the resulting discoveries could -

EIFFEL
Oh my God, would you stop? Are you listening? Are you ever listening? Partnership's over: move on.

HILBERT
Yes, make more jokes. Meanwhile, potential benefits for humanity -

EIFFEL
What the hell do you know about humanity? You talk about helping people, but what about the real, live people around you?

HILBERT
Increasingly, I find them to be of negligible importance.

EIFFEL
And <u>that's</u> your problem.
(BEAT)
You're so zoomed out. Everyone looks like ants to you. And what's a couple of squishes for the good of the colony?

BEAT.

HILBERT
I respected your wishes. I have mitigated adverse effects. There is nothing else I can do for you. But you could do so much for so many. Are you not *haunted* by that?

EIFFEL
(plain and simple:)
No. I'm haunted by what happened to Officer Lambert and Doctor Hui.

HILBERT
You lack vision, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
At least I don't lack a <u>soul</u>.
(beat, quietly)
We're never getting on the same page about this, are we?

HILBERT
It would appear not.

There's a long, SILENT BEAT. Finally -

HILBERT (CONT'D)
May I have pliers?

EIFFEL
Yeah. Here.

As TINKERING SOUNDS resume, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - PORT SENSORY ARRAY - 1130 HOURS

Various CLICKS as Maxwell, Jacobi, and Minkowski secure their harnesses. They're posted in a ledge on the hull.

HERA
(over comms)
It looks like you're in position.

MAXWELL
Roger that, Hera. We'll start deploying the receiver.

JACOBI
Hey! Spoilers.

MINKOWSKI
Here, Jacobi - help me to get it aligned with the sensory array.

JACOBI
On it. Lets see if we can -

BEEP! BEEP! A small alarm's going off in their helmets.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(instantly)
Hold.

All three of them BRACE as they're hit with a BLAST OF ION WIND. Around them, their equipment SHAKES badly.

After a moment, it subsides.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
All clear. Lets get the receiver bolted down *before* the next salvo.

MINKOWSKI
Are we sure that this is safe?

JACOBI
Uh, <u>no</u>.

We hear the SCRAPE OF METAL against the hull.

HERA
Your suits have plenty of radiation shielding, and your mag boots are running at their maximum setting.

MAXWELL
Which means we're not going to get blown off the hull, but there's still all sorts of things that could go wrong.

JACOBI
C'mon, enough chit-chat, help me get this in -
(BEEP! BEEP!)
Hold.

More metal SCRAPING. After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
Careful, watch out for the biters.

MAXWELL
The what?

JACOBI
Exhaust gears and heating fans. Look down.

We now zero in on the HUM and GRIND of various machine parts and gears as they turn and churn in the space below them.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Engineering's right on the other side of the hull there. Those big gears are a few of the station's exterior moving parts. Don't mess with 'em.
(metal scrapes)
Okay, first panel's in position.

MINKOWSKI
Roger that. Hold it steady.

For a moment, we hear DRILLING as Minkowski sets the panel.

JACOBI
One down, three to go. Maxwell?

More SCRAPING.

MAXWELL
Ready?

JACOBI
Yep.

DRIIILL.

JACOBI (CONT’D)
Halfway there. Lets get the -
(BEEP! BEEP!)
Hold.

They brace as they get another blast of ion wind. STRONGER than the past two. It blows... and blows...

CRUNCH! One of the panels they installed just came loose!

MINKOWSKI
Maxwell! Look out!

Minkowski SHOVES Maxwell out of the way - which leaves her exactly in the path of the MOVING PIECE OF METAL! BAM!

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Agh!

It HITS her squarely, knocking her back - straight into -

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
AHHH!

Instantly, the turning gears and machine bits STOP MOVING, and start GRINDING ANGRILY, PRESSURE BUILDING.

Not that Minkowski cares. She's too busy SCREAMING IN AGONY.

JACOBI
Goddammit, right into the -

MINKOWSKI
AHHH!

JACOBI
Maxwell, the wrench!

MAXWELL
But -

JACOBI
Now!

She gives him the wrench. In a flash, he's next to Minkowski, PLUNGING THE WRENCH into the machinery. The GRINDING SUBSIDES, as does the agonized yelling.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Minkowski, you okay?

MINKOWSKI
(very fast breathing)
Yeah. Yeah. I think so. At least... my leg's not... crushed.

JACOBI
Good. Can you get it out of the biter?

Minkowski TRIES. It HURTS.

MINKOWSKI
Nope. Not coming out.

She goes back to the fast breaths. Jacobi lets out a low one, then CLICKS ON HIS RADIO.

JACOBI
Hey boss? You're gonna want to get over here. We've got a situation.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - PORT SENSORY ARRAY - 15 MINUTES LATER

EIFFEL
(over comms)
What do you mean... caught in the engines?

Minkowski is still stuck in the biters. Jacobi and Maxwell are with her, and have been joined by Kepler and Lovelace.

JACOBI
I think those words explain the situation completely, Eiffel.

MAXWELL
One of the panels we were bolting down got ripped up by the storm.

KEPLER
And it got the Lieutenant?

JACOBI
Only because she did the studly, manly thing and knocked Maxwell out of the way.

KEPLER
Touching. How do we get her out? Can we turn off whatever those gears are attached to?

HERA
Uh, engineering department is going to say, "No," to turning off parts of our engine systems. That ends in a very... *dangerous* place for everyone.

LOVELACE
What about jamming the gears from the inside?

JACOBI
(peering into the biters)
Mmm, that might help to ease up the tension. Looks like this is all the thermal exhaust network.

KEPLER
Eiffel, could you manage that?

EIFFEL
Uhhh... no.

MINKOWSKI
(height of sarcasm)
Hah!

EIFFEL
Yeeeah, sorry, Colonel, but I got no idea where that is, and you don't want me sticking wrenches in the wrong bit of hardware.

Around here, we MIGHT notice a SOUND. Low, but sharp...

KEPLER
Jacobi?

JACOBI
I mean, I know *exactly* where that is, but I'm out here. Bit of a hike.

KEPLER
Well, Minkowski's still got - what? Ninety minutes of O2? We got time.

This time we hear it properly, LOUDER. CRRK. The unmistakable sound of CRACKING GLASS.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh... Colonel?

Everyone's attention shifts. Instantly they see it. Shit.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
We might have... less time.

KEPLER
Goddammit...

MAXWELL
How did that - ?

JACOBI
Panel must have hit her visor. And *cracked* it.

KEPLER
Jacobi -

JACOBI
Get to engineering?

KEPLER
<u>Double time</u>. Maxwell: go with him. Help.

MAXWELL
Yep.

And with that, they're both off.

KEPLER
Eiffel, get to airlock number two. Be ready to let them in the moment that they gets there.

EIFFEL
Ye - yes sir.

Minkowski, Kepler, and Lovelace all look at each other.

LOVELACE
Well... this is bad.

KEPLER
Hera? How long do we have?

HERA
Umm... it's... kinda hard to calculate without a sense of -

CRRRK!

HERA (CON'T) (CONT'D)
- umm, not long is the safe assumption.

KEPLER
Ballpark?

HERA
Minutes.

KEPLER
Advice?

HERA
Uh... well, changes in interior air pressure can exacerbate a rupture process, so -

MINKOWSKI
(shaky)
Hera... if you are about to suggest that I *hold my breath* until I can get back inside -

HERA
Just trying to help, Lieutenant. Try not to... make any sudden movements. Or <u>any</u> movements really.

But at that moment - BEEP! BEEP!

LOVELACE
Brace yourselves.

A BLAST OF ION WIND HITS THEM. We hear parts of the station SHAKE AND GROAN. Minkowski GRUNTS, biting back pain.

As it dies down -

CRRK! CRRRK!

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's... definitely not helping anything.

Over the COMMS, we hear a HISS OF AIR and a HATCH OPENING.

EIFFEL
(over comms)
All right, Jacobi and Maxwell are inside and - whoa! - off to engineering. Hauling ass!

MINKOWSKI
(low, sullen)
Hooray...

LOVELACE
Just hang on, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, that part is definitely happening.

KEPLER
Captain? Any ideas?

LOVELACE
Not really. Not unless you want me to tape her visor.

MINKOWSKI
If you do that... I won't be able to see...

LOVELACE
You wanna see or you wanna <u>breathe</u>?

CRRRK! Louder. Minkowski SHARPLY DRAWS BREATH.

KEPLER
Do it. Tape her.

LOVELACE
Aye-aye.
(to Minkowski)
Just stay still for a moment.

CRRRRSSHP. A piece of tape just got RIPPED.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Duct tape - is there anything it can't it fix?

We hear her - carefully but firmly - placing the tape on Minkowski visor. Then twice more - CRRRRSHHP! THUCK! CRRRRSHHHHP! THUCK!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
There.

MINKOWSKI
I can't see anything.

LOVELACE
But you're the latest in Hephaestus fashion.

CRSSSH! The COMMS CRACKLE -

JACOBI
Boss? We've made it to engineering.

KEPLER
Outstanding. Do you know which parts you need to jam?

JACOBI
Yes, but we need a moment to -

As Jacobi speaks - BEEP! BEEP! Another weather warning.

LOVELACE
Colonel - brace!

FWWWWOOOOM! The ion winds are stronger than we've heard before - the station SHAKES BADLY around them.

And as the winds RISE and then FALL... CRRRK! CRRRK!

JACOBI
Okay... how's... this?

Through the comms, we hear the sound of SLIDING METAL, which immediately triggers MUCH ANGRY GRINDING and GROANING. Almost immediately, SOMETHING METALLIC SHIFTS around Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Ahh! I think - wait, let me - okay, I think I might be able to - ughhh!

She GROANS as she pulls herself up, and out of the biters.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
There. Okay. I'm out. Now I just -

LOVELACE
Here. I've got you.

Lovelace is at her side, holding her arm and guiding her.

KEPLER
How's that visor doing, Lieutenant?

CRRK!

MINKOWSKI
Not good.

KEPLER
(taking her other arm)
C'mon... lets get you inside.

We hear as they begin to move towards the air lock, each of their MAGNETIZED FOOTSTEPS RESONATING.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Eiffel, get the airlock ready.
We're coming to you.

EIFFEL
On it.

STEP... STEP... STEP...

KEPLER
Nice and easy, nice and easy.

MINKOWSKI
How about fast? Fast would be good.

STEP... STEP... STEP...

KEPLER
Almost there. Just a little bit -

BEEP. BEEP. All three of them TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Hold. Brace yourselves.

They do. Moments later the WINDS PICK UP around them. THEY BLOW... AND BLOW... the station SHAKES AROUND THEM... CRRK!

And they... KEEP BLOWING... and BLOWING... this is LONGER than the previous ones. And as a result... CRRK! CRRK!

LOVELACE
Colonel...

KEPLER
Hold...

LOVELACE
I don't know how much longer we -

KEPLER
You break magnetic contact and
you're gonna get us all blown off
the hull. Hold.

But Lovelace has a point, because again... CRRRK!

Finally... the WINDS DIE DOWN.

BEAT.

Then three VERY RELIEVED SIGHS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
All clear... lets go.

STEP... STEP... STEP...

LOVELACE
Just... a little bit... further...

STEP... STEP... so close...

KEPLER
And...

STEP... and then HISS! as he PULLS OPEN the AIRLOCK DOOR.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
There we are! In you go!

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK #2 - CONTINUOUS

Kepler, Lovelace, and Minkowski all spill into the airlock. Kepler turns around, PULLS THE DOOR SHUT behind him.

Immediately there's a BLAST OF AIR as the room begins to re-pressurize. Minkowski SCRAMBLES, TEARING off her HELMET. It comes off with a CLICK. For a few seconds we hear her HYPERVENTILATE...

LOVELACE
Minkowski?
(BEAT)
You okay?

PANT... PANT... PANT...

MINKOWSKI
(wide-eyed)
Yeah.
(BEAT)
I think so?

LOVELACE
Okay.

KEPLER
Good.
(clicks on his comms)
Jacobi, Eiffel, we made it back inside. We're all fine.

We hear EIFFEL let out a RELIEVED BREATH.

JACOBI
Glad to hear it.

KEPLER
Get the engines unstuck. And pick up one of the spare helmets on your way down here, will you?

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

The LINE CLOSES with a CLICK. Kepler turns back towards the two women, who still haven't quite recomposed themselves.

KEPLER
Well... that was some fun.

MINKOWSKI
No, it... really wasn't...

KEPLER
Well, take a moment. Breathe, compose yourself. We'll try again in ten minutes.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Try... <u>what</u> again in ten minutes?

KEPLER
Oh, we still have ways to go with the regulator install.
(off their faces)
What? Don't tell me you thought I'd call it off because of one tiny emergency, did you? <u>We don't go home until the job's done</u>.
(BEAT)
Ten minutes. Be ready to go.

And with that, he OPENS the interior hatch of the AIRLOCK and exits. Off their stunned, horrified expressions, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1800 HOURS

Hilbert has hooked the device he and Eiffel built into the comms system. For a moment he waits. Then -

KNOCK, KNOCK. The DOOR SWINGS OPEN as Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert? Hera said that you wanted to see me?

HILBERT
Yes, Minkowski. I wanted to show you something.

MINKOWSKI
Does - does it have to be right now? I've had a **really** long day and I'm -

HILBERT
I have a way for you to communicate directly with Earth.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

HILBERT
I have a way for -

MINKOWSKI
No, no, I heard you. How?

HILBERT
Custom modification to the pulse beacon relay. Adapted for terrestrial voice telecommunication.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Yeahbuhwhat? Huh?

HILBERT
Idea I have considered for some time, and the Urania's stores provided necessary components. Eiffel helped fill in last blanks.

MINKOWSKI
You and Eiffel... put this together?

HILBERT
Yes. It will consume the only battery very quickly. It may only last for one call, only for one or two minutes at best.

MINKOWSKI
But why are you giving it to me? Don't you want to talk to your -

HILBERT
To my *what*?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
All right. What do I do?

HILBERT
It is currently Wednesday, 4:01 P.M. Eastern Time. Think very carefully about which number to call. Tell me number, and hold up receiver. I will handle the rest.

BEAT. Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
202-452-7468. 202-452-7468.

Hilbert PUNCHES the numbers into the device, which begins to HUM. He hands her the receiver.

HILBERT
I hope he is there.

MINKOWSKI
Me too. Thank you, Doctor.

HILBERT
Do not thank me yet.

She holds up the device to her ear. There's some old school DIAL-UP MODEM SOUNDS. The device THRUMS. We hear STATIC.

But this gives way to a GRAINY PHONE RING.

RING-RING.

RING-RING.

RING-RING.

RING - Suddenly, the other end of the line CRACKLES to life.

VOICE
Good afternoon, this is The Times, Mr. Koudelka's desk. How can I help you?

For a moment, Minkowski absorbs that this thing actually worked. Presumably, an assistant picked up.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Hello...?

MINKOWSKI
Yes! Hello! Hi! I - I need to speak with Mr. Koudelka immediately!

VOICE
Um, may I ask what this is con-

MINKOWSKI
It's urgent! Please, I need to -

VOICE
Woah, woah, woah. Slow down there. Mr. Koudelka is extremely -

MINKOWSKI
Busy! Of course he is, but, this is an emergency. I need to speak with him <u>now</u>.

VOICE
With respect, ma'am, I need to know what this is regarding.

MINKOWSKI
Look, this is his *wife,* okay? And I don't have much time.

VOICE
Wait, *what* did you say?

MINKOWSKI
This is Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski, <u>his wife</u>, so you need put me through to Dominik right the hell now!

BEAT.

VOICE
(low, cold)
Look, whoever this is? This isn't funny.

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

VOICE
What, you think I don't know? The Times covered the story. *Everyone* here knows. Just because it was over a year ago doesn't mean -

MINKOWSKI
What are you *talking* about?!

VOICE
Renée Minkowski? She was one of the astronauts caught in that terrible shuttle explosion. There were no survivors.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, what explosi - ?!

VOICE
So I don't know who *you* are, or what game you're playing, but -

But at this crucial juncture in the conversation, the line DISSOLVES INTO STATIC.

MINKOWSKI
Hello?! Hello?!

BEAT. The line's gone dead.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(much smaller)
...Hello?

Slowly, the receiver drops away from her face.

Hilbert approaches her, concerned.

HILBERT
Minkowski? Are you all right?
(BEAT)
What happened?

And now that all hope has been destroyed, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - MEANWHILE

Lovelace, alone in her quarters. After a moment - KNOCK, KNOCK. She approaches the door, OPENS IT.

LOVELACE
Colonel. Can I help you.

KEPLER
Captain... I wanted to thank you. You did a good job, especially when things went slightly pear-shaped. I wanted to give you something.

LOVELACE
What?

THWUMP! A file has just landed on Lovelace's hand. We hear her FLIP through the pages.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What's this?

KEPLER
Some bedtime reading. Extracts of my latest report to Command, in regards to Mr. Jacobi's status. A full physical examination administered by Doctor Hilbert, which revealed absolutely <u>nothing</u> to be amiss. He passed his psych eval with flying colors. You'll also find a copy of your account, as well as Officer Eiffel's and Doctor Maxwell's.

LOVELACE
And the point of this is -

KEPLER
The man that you brought back is the genuine article.

LOVELACE
How can you possibly know that?

KEPLER
Because you had continuity of contact with him while he was outside the module. Because medically and psychologically he is exactly who he was before he left.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
He's human. Maxwell, Hilbert, and I are all satisfied.

LOVELACE
And - and is there *a reason* why you haven't shared this with the rest of the crew?

KEPLER
Nothing was wrong.
(with a shrug)
You asked, now you know.

LOVELACE
And you don't think that I -

She stops herself. Kepler watches her.

KEPLER
That you what?

BEAT. No answer.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
(takes a deep breath)
So here's what I'm worried about: you killed a man.

LOVELACE
You just said he wasn't the real -

KEPLER
Whatever it was... it acted like a man. It sounded like a man.

LOVELACE
And?

KEPLER
And I'm thinking that's the kind of thing that stays with you, might catch up to you at the wrong moment. Which would be bad.
(then)
Or I'm thinking that you are surprisingly okay with hearing this station's first officer screaming in agony as he undergoes a horrible death. Which would also be bad.

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

LOVELACE
He hadn't started talking. When I took out the motion sensor, I - I didn't know what was out there.

KEPLER
You think you might have done something differently if you did?

LOVELACE
I don't know. Maybe.

KEPLER
Well... that's a start. Enjoy your reading, Captain.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1700 HOURS

We hear Eiffel TYPING, sorta muttering to himself. Then -

KA-BAM! The DOOR SLAMS OPEN and Minkowski enters.

EIFFEL
Ahh!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. We need to talk.

BAM! She's slammed the door shut.

EIFFEL
Whoa. Commander! You're talking to me again! I guess that means it -

MINKOWSKI
Shut up. Hera? Run a diagnostics on the comms system in this room. **Now.**

HERA
Uh... Lieutenant? Are you -

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

HERA
But - but that's the sixth time you've asked me to do that this hour. If anyone was paying attention to -

MINKOWSKI
Just do it, Hera!

HERA
Yes, sir!

There's a CHIRP as all of the comms in the room go offline.

EIFFEL
Uhh... sooo I'm gonna take a shot in the dark here and guess that something went horribly wrong?

MINKOWSKI
Shut up, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
O-Kay. Shutting up.

MINKOWSKI
Tonight. At 2300. You're going to get a comms message from me. I'm going to say that you need to help me calibrate the starboard engine. You are going to go to the engineering section, and then you're going to follow -
(holds up piece of pager)
- these *very* specific instructions, until you find a door you've never seen before. One that's not on any of the station schematics.

EIFFEL
... and what's on the other side of that door? Santa's workshop?

MINKOWSKI
I'll be there. So will Hilbert and Lovelace. We are going to settle this. Once and for all.

EIFFEL
Commander, settle *what?* What's going on?

MINKOWSKI
We're dead, Eiffel. That's what's going on.

EIFFEL
Come again?

MINKOWSKI
Everyone back on Earth thinks that we're dead. Command told them there was some kind of shuttle crash.

EIFFEL
What?

MINKOWSKI
As far as anyone's concerned, we've been dead *for years*.
(BEAT)
They have no intention of ever letting us leave this place alive.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
So... what are we gonna do now?

The fire that flashes across Renée Minkowski's face actually makes Eiffel back away from her a little.

MINKOWSKI
Now? Now we take our station back. Now we **kill** Warren Kepler, before he kills us.

And off of that, we -

FADE TO:

END CREDITS.

After the credits finish, we're left with SILENCE.

But after about TWENTY SECONDS, we hear A DOOR OPEN.

LOVELACE
So? How'd it go?

HILBERT
Exactly to plan.

LOVELACE
Command staged their deaths?

HILBERT
As was to be expected. But, she needed to find out for herself.
(BEAT)
She is ready to do what must be done. And Eiffel will follow her.

LOVELACE
Hmm. Guess you were right. They just needed some persuasion.

HILBERT
Now all that is left is for us to pull trigger.

LOVELACE
Good. I'm tired of waiting.

She CRACKS HER NECK.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Let's do this.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 43.

WOLF 359

"DESPERATE TIMES"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1082 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 44.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HIDDEN ROOM - 2300 HOURS

The room beyond the door. Eiffel, Minkowski, Hilbert, and Lovelace, all in attendance. Eiffel stands over a large container, secured to the floor.

EIFFEL
Umm... Holy crap.

HILBERT
There are four more in the back. Should be more than -

EIFFEL
Uh, the normal people among us are still back at holy crap.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, it's just a -

EIFFEL
Just a what? Just a huge pile of napalm?!

LOVELACE
A preventive measure. We put this together in case we -

EIFFEL
In case we ever need to *horrifically* murder someone? Do you know what this stuff does?

HILBERT
It adheres to the skin. Releases carbon monoxide and burns at over -

EIFFEL
I wasn't asking for a clinical description! I can't believe this. We all agreed that we shouldn't listen to Dr. Kevorkian -

HILBERT
That's not exactly -

LOVELACE
Eeeehh...

EIFFEL
- and **for months** the two of you've been going behind our backs and getting your Wile E. Coyote on! And, not to go all High School Principal on you, Hera, but is there a reason why you didn't share this with the rest of the class?

HERA
I didn't know about any of this, actually. This is new to me too.

EIFFEL
What? How can you - ugh, goddamit. Let me guess: secret room?

LOVELACE
Yup.

EIFFEL
And it's... what? Outside of your sense horizon, Hera?

HERA
Very much so.

EIFFEL
Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And... that's why you set up those comms before we started up this little midnight confab? To loop Hera in?

HILBERT
Precisely.

EIFFEL
Oookay. In that case, I, uh, only have two questions. Number one: **HOW MANY OF THESE FREAKIN' ROOMS ARE THERE ON THIS STATION?** And number two: **HOW COME HE ALWAYS KNOWS ABOUT THEM BEFORE THE REST OF US DO? THEM BEFORE THE REST OF US DO?**

LOVELACE
He's a rat, he's good at finding rat holes, okay? Can we move on?

EIFFEL
Mmmmrrrrr... *fine*.
(to Minkowski)
Lets move onto why you're not saying anything. Commander?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Any comment on these two cooking up a bunch of war crime fuel?

MINKOWSKI
Good.

EIFFEL
That's not what I - uhhh. Any **longer** comment?

MINKOWSKI
Very good.

EIFFEL
<u>You're not helping</u>!

MINKOWSKI
Walk me through your plan again.

EIFFEL
Could we not -

LOVELACE
We're twenty-eight hours out from the contact event. We need to be gone by the time it starts. Which means we'll need a time when Kepler, Jacobi, and Maxwell are all going to be together, by themselves, on the Hephaestus.

HILBERT
For example: tomorrow at 0900 hours, when they are scheduled to run final tests on the psi wave regulator.

LOVELACE
We can place containers of napalm in the hangar bay, and use a timed detonator to -

EIFFEL
Nope.

LOVELACE
- use a timed detonator to -

EIFFEL
Nope.

HILBERT
(out with it)
To make our problems go away.

LOVELACE
Thank you, Doctor. We get whatever DNA we need to bypass the biometric locks, disengage whatever parts of the Urania we need free in order to leave, and get the hell out of Dodge before the world turns upside down. Again.

EIFFEL
(scoff)
Oh, what a great plan, Cap'n. Art of War of 1812 different ways to gonna get us all *killed*. What if you blast open a hole in the hull?

HILBERT
Chemical quantities have been carefully callibrated. Temperature will not compromise hull.

EIFFEL
Well, what if we can't get the Urania to fly?

LOVELACE
Its core infrastructure is still in one piece, the engine runs, and I can get *anything* to fly.

EIFFEL
Well great, Captain, that's swell: how about **if we don't want kill anybody**?

MINKOWSKI
This isn't about what we want.
(BEAT)
We're expendable in the long term. We know that now. If Kepler hasn't killed us already, it's because he thinks he still needs us for something. Probably for whatever is about to happen tomorrow.

LOVELACE
Once that's done, we might not be so useful anymore. Clock's ticking. Desperate times...

EIFFEL
There's desperate, and then there's **stupid**. Commander: right now? You're very angry.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You're angrier than I've ever seen you. And I think that anybody that's *that* upset is going to make bad calls.

HERA
I agree, Lieutenant. This isn't a tenable plan.

MINKOWSKI
Well, what else have you got?! Hmm? What do the two of you have to contribute to the cause?
(BEAT)
Well?!

There's a LONG BEAT as her words echo. Finally -

EIFFEL
I don't know, Commander. I don't know how we're gonna get out of this one. But I know you and -

MINKOWSKI
You don't -

EIFFEL
I know you. And you don't want to kill anyone.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I really, **really** do.

For a moment they just look at each other, each adamant in their own ways. The others watch - what is about to...?

Finally, Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL
All right. I didn't want it to come to this. But if I have to...

He takes a moment, CRACKS his NECK on one side, then the OTHER... then straightens himself up, STANDING AT ATTENTION:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Commander Minkowski: under Article 12, Air Force Code of Conduct, Section 9, Subsection B;
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
due to a state of impaired judgment displayed during a time of acute emotional stress, I am formally invoking the Transfer of Command and relieving of your duties.

BEAT. He stares at her evenly.

MINKOWSKI
... are you serious?

EIFFEL
Dead serious, ma'am.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
That's Lieutenant Commander Eiffel to you, *Officer*.

BEAT.

And then Minkowski BREAKS OUT INTO LAUGHTER. After a moment, Hera and, in spite of herself, Lovelace also join in.

Eiffel lets out a LOW BREATH. After a moment:

MINKOWSKI
Okay, okay... you made your point.

EIFFEL
Good.
(then:)
Did I get any of those right?

MINKOWSKI
Not a single one.

And everyone, now including Eiffel (but excluding Hilbert) CRACKS UP again. As they settle:

EIFFEL
You okay?

Minkowski TAKES A DEEP BREATH. Then, finally:

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, yeah. I'm okay.
(lower)
I'm okay.

HILBERT
What on Earth just happened?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, don't worry about it. And put away the napalm.

HILBERT
I... I don't understand.

EIFFEL
Yeah, of course you don't. You live amongst the natives but you don't speak the language.

HILBERT
What does that - ?

MINKOWSKI
It means Eiffel's right. We can't do this. This isn't us.

EIFFEL
Yup. Team What's Wrong with Handcuffs strikes again!

HILBERT
Then what do you propose we do?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Actually... I think I might have an idea.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - 2 HOURS LATER

Eiffel by himself, at the comms controls. He plays with the radio, and we hear INTERFERENCE and STATIC from the system.

MINKOWSKI
(from the door)
Can't sleep?

He looks at her over his shoulder, then back at the comms.

EIFFEL
Nah. Thought I'd see if there was anything good on the TV

He SHUTS OFF the radio. For a moment, they are silent.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Look, Commander I'm sorry that -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I owe you an apology for -

EIFFEL
Oh, uh -

MINKOWSKI
Sorry, you go -

EIFFEL
No, no, *please*.

She takes a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry for... for everything. I should have told you when I first found out. And how I reacted was... Hilbert was right -

EIFFEL
Uhh, let's not say crazy things -

MINKOWSKI
No, he *was*! We have way too much to worry about without me being childish and petty about things that aren't my business. I'm sorry.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
They *are* your business. Look: thank you for the apology. It means a lot, but... I should have told you. Maybe not right away, but... I should have told you. Or... at the very least I shouldn't have made fun of you for not telling us about your husband.

MINKOWSKI
The thought *did* cross my mind...

EIFFEL
(chuckles)
Yeah. I guess we're both kinda... not great at this whole... sharing thing.
(BEAT)
I didn't want to be that person.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
When Cutter got me out of jail, I felt like I was those mistakes. Like I was **just** those mistakes.

MINKOWSKI
You're not.

EIFFEL
And then the longer I didn't say anything, I felt like I was getting farther and farther away from that person and I... No. I should have told you. I'm sorry.

MINKOWSKI
You have <u>nothing</u> to apologize for. Not to me. Friends?

She's offering her hand. He looks at it... and smiles.

EIFFEL
(shaking on it)
Sir, yes, sir.

HERA
D'aawwwww.

EIFFEL
Shut up, Hera.

MINKOWSKI
Shut up, Hera.

HERA
But the two of you are *adorable*.

EIFFEL
<u>Shut up, Hera</u>.

MINKOWSKI
<u>Shut up, Hera</u>.

HERA
Okay, okay. Shutting up.

For a moment, they both just stare out the window.

EIFFEL
Tomorrow's really gonna happen, isn't it?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, it is.

EIFFEL
Right... Let's make sure that all of us get through this, okay?

BEAT.

HERA
We'll do our best, Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. We'll do our best.

Off of that encouraging sentiment, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - HIDDEN ROOM - 2 HOURS LATER

Hilbert, alone in the room. We hear a BURST of MECHANICAL WHIRRING and an ELECTRICAL HUM. After that, there is a silence for a moment, followed by a HEAVY, WEARY BREATH.

Then there is silence, until -

LOVELACE
Feeling tempted?

HILBERT
Captain. I was just...

LOVELACE
Yes? Just?

BEAT. He doesn't have a good answer for her.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
You think we're going to lose.

HILBERT
I think Eiffel and Minkowski are imbeciles. Whether we are going to win or lose, that I am still debating.

LOVELACE
And if everything's so up in the air, maybe you get yourself a safeguard? Maybe you hop in the chair after all?

He turns away from her, towards the machine.

HILBERT
I am taking a terrible risk. Eiffel's plan -

LOVELACE
- isn't half bad. And you know it.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
But it's a compromise, and you don't like those. Which got you thinking...

HILBERT
I am *always* thinking, Isabel.

LOVELACE
Mmm. If you did it, it's not like you'd get to come back, right? It's not like... they take your brain scan and, I don't know, turn it into an A.I. or something?

HILBERT
Of course not. They would process my neural pathways and digitally extract whatever is useful, archive the rest. Most efficient use of resources.

She moves around him, forcing him to face her.

LOVELACE
So? What the hell is stopping you?

HILBERT
I'm sorry?

LOVELACE
Just get it over with, would you? Because I'm not having you dropping any balls tomorrow cause you're too busy pining for Dr. Frankenstein's La-Z Boy Recliner. If you need to do this thing, then just **do it** already. Go nuts!
(slow, pointed:)
But whether or not I finally get off this station all depends on tomorrow, and I'm not gonna have you go weak sister on us just because you're too busy woulda-coulda-shoulda-ing to get your head in the game! Do whatever you have to do... but then be done with it.

HILBERT
Lovelace, I -

LOVELACE
Nope. No more talking. Time to choose.

Hilbert's eyes flicker between Lovelace and the chair.

LOVELACE (CON'T) (CONT'D)
What's it gonna be, Doc?

And off of that question, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 0900 HOURS

The next day. Eiffel and Lovelace walk together. From overhead, we hear the P.A. CHIME.

HERA
(over P.A.)
Good morning, everyone. Final tests on the psi wave regulator are scheduled to begin in five minutes. Colonel Kepler requests that all unessential crew members stay away from the hangar bay until testing is complete. Thank you.

The P.A. CHIMES again. Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL
Here we go...

LOVELACE
You ready?

EIFFEL
Well, I'm not getting any readier.

A DOOR OPENS, and they're joined by Hilbert and Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
All the equipment's in place.

HILBERT
Just need to position the targets.

EIFFEL
Kepler should take care of that. We just need you guys and Hera to get the ball rolling.

MINKOWSKI
That we can do.

There's a PAUSE. They all stop and look at each other.

EIFFEL
So... Any last words? All for one and one for all? We few, we happy few? Hakuna Matata?

HERA
How about, "Nobody do anything too stupid?"

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, that sounds about right. Everybody?

EIFFEL, LOVELACE, MINKOWSKI, HERA
Nobody do anything too stupid.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Commander, Doc, get to engineering. Hera will keep you connected as long as she can.

LOVELACE
We'll give you the signal once they're off to the races.

HILBERT
Aye, Captain. Watch your backs.

LOVELACE
Yeah, you too. Break a leg, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Thanks.

EIFFEL
Good luck. See you on the other side.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as Minkowski and Hilbert exit.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right then...
(claps his hands)
it's showtime, folks!

And with that, they head off, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - MINUTES LATER

Kepler stands in front of the psi wave regulator. Jacobi and Maxwell tinker with different parts of the machine.

KEPLER
How much longer?

MAXWELL
We are almost ready, sir. Just doing some final adjustments.

KEPLER
Get it done, double time.

Behind them, a DOOR OPENS as Eiffel and Lovelace enter. Kepler turns around to see them.

EIFFEL
Uh, sir?

LOVELACE
Colonel?

KEPLER
The hell are you two doing here?

EIFFEL
Well -

KEPLER
(holding up a finger)
And before you answer, remember: you both have very clear instructions on what you should be doing. None of them involve you being in the hangar bay. Therefore, I trust that whatever brings you here is nothing short of a situation of absolutely elephantine proportions.
(BEAT)
How may I help you?

EIFFEL
Uhh, well, sir, Doctor Bones said to ipso our facto over here at warp speeds or we'd all be -

KEPLER
(at Lovelace)
You: same question, better answer.

LOVELACE
Hilbert says there's something wrong with the power grid.

KEPLER
He does?

LOVELACE
(sotto to Eiffel)
That's all you had to say.
(normal)
Yes, sir. Hilbert has been monitoring the station's energy expenditure. Apparently this section of the Hephaestus is -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
- several gigajoules above the recommended levels for -

EIFFEL
(V.O.)
All right. So here's my idea.

Yep, we just heard Eiffel talk over Lovelace, and a moment later, with a transitional "WOOSH!", we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

The previous night. Eiffel, Minkowski, Lovelace, and Hilbert together. Much discussion has occurred.

EIFFEL
Stop me if you've heard this one before. So as far as openings for civil uprisings, we've got tomorrow. Which *really* means...

MINKOWSKI
Tomorrow morning's equipment test.

EIFFEL
Bingo. Whatever the Mystery Machine does, Kepler and the Terrible Trio are hell bent on getting it running before E.T. phones home. Which makes their calibration test tomorrow morning -

LOVELACE
- the perfect chance to do a bit of dividing and conquering.

EIFFEL
Ding-ding-ding, we have a winner.

And off of that, with another WOOSH!, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

Kepler is still talking to Eiffel and Lovelace.

KEPLER
Get to the point.

LOVELACE
The point is that there's something wrong with the power grid. Sir.

KEPLER
Jacobi...

Off of Kepler turning towards Jacobi, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

EIFFEL
Everyone's gonna be tense...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

JACOBI
There's nothing wrong with the power grid!

KEPLER
Are... you... sure?

JACOBI
Positive.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

EIFFEL
Distracted...

BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

JACOBI
I installed all the modifications. I checked them, I double-checked them, and then I ran the entire system through a triple-check twenty-four hours ago.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

EIFFEL
Chances are they might not notice some last second...

HILBERT
Alterations.

BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

Kepler seems to tower ominously over Jacobi.

KEPLER
If it's -

JACOBI
It's **fine.**

KEPLER
But if it's not -

JACOBI
It is. I'm <u>sure</u>. Sir, don't worry. Everything is going to be -

And that's when a FUSE BLOWS. We hear multiple systems immediately SHUT DOWN.

BEAT.

KEPLER
All right... so, what went wrong?

JACOBI
I'm... not sure, sir. The electrical intake should have -

KEPLER
Oh, I didn't mean with the machine, I meant with that **bag of cobwebs that you call a brain**, you evolutionary backstep!

JACOBI
Sir, I made a mistake, I take full responsibility. If I could just speak for a moment without the blunt force trauma face -

KEPLER
Oh, this isn't the blunt force trauma face.
(makes the necessary adjustment)
This is the blunt force trauma face.

JACOBI
(yikes)
I... see your point. But, sir, we can fix this. It's just gonna take a moment.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

LOVELACE
What about Maxwell?

MINKOWSKI
I've got an idea.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

Kepler glares at Jacobi.

KEPLER
Lets see what the person behind door number two has to say, shall we?
(at Maxwell)
Doctor! Can **you** tell me what is wrong with our *priority one equipment*?

MAXWELL
(nervous laugh)
Umm, yes, sir. It's just going to -

KEPLER
Tell me in the next twenty seconds, and you get Jacobi's job, Jacobi's room, and... a lovely set of steak knives - although you'll have to dig those out of Mr. Jacobi's incompetent corpse.

Her DEVICE CHIRPS. She looks down at it.

MAXWELL
Ahhh. It - it looks like the problem... <u>was</u> the power grid.

JACOBI
No.

KEPLER
The power grid that **Mr. Jacobi** just **personally assured** me - ?

JACOBI
Sir, I spent *hours* yesterday checking everything with that. It was **fine!**

KEPLER
Does everything look *fine*, you jelly-brained piece of - ?

MAXWELL
Sir, Hera and I can run a diagnostic in just a moment.

KEPLER
That right?

HERA
Yes, sir. We can handle that remotely.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

MINKOWSKI
Hera... you remember the big red cable?

HERA
Oh. Oh, yes, Lieutenant. That could work.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

Various DIGITAL sounds as Hera runs the program.

HERA
Processing diagnostic request on tech panel. Please wait. Forty percent... Sixty percent...

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

LOVELACE
Wait, what's the big red cable do?

HILBERT
Temporary interruption of A.I. neurological functioning, at a base processing level.

EIFFEL
Translation?

HERA
Forced crash, triggered from the engineering section.

MINKOWSKI
We wait for the right moment and...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

HERA
Processing... eighty percent... ninety per - ninety per - ninety per - ninety per -

VROOOM... a massive device POWERS DOWN as Hera crashes.

BEAT. We might hear a VEIN THROB in Kepler's forehead.

EIFFEL
Ummm, guy? I think Hera just -

KEPLER
Eiffel, when I want to hear from the IQ Elimination Department, I'll give you a buzz. Until then: shut the hell up!
(turns around)
Maxwell: best excuse of your sad little existence. Go.

MAXWELL
If - if I may... sir...

KEPLER
You said this was under control.

MAXWELL
I said I would **try**! But a mind isn't something that I can -

KEPLER
Yes, it is. And you <u>know</u> that.

MAXWELL
Colonel, you can't simply expect a complicated problem to be solved -

JACOBI
Sir, I feel like there's more going on here than just -

KEPLER
Quiet.

There is quiet.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Here is what is going to happen.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

HILBERT
First, he will send Maxwell to the bridge.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

KEPLER
Doctor: get to the bridge. Get this A.I. running. Get it *stable*.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

EIFFEL
Then he'll send Jacobi to the tech wing, so that he can figure out what's wrong with the power grid.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

KEPLER
Jacobi. Double time it over to the Tech wing. Figure out what the hell went wrong with your system, get it running again.

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Let me make this... **abundantly clear:** We are on the eve of the most important night of our tiny, insignificant lives. If we miss the opportunity because of *your* technical difficulties, it would be... very *sad*.
(BEAT)
So fix this, or **I WILL KILL YOU!**
(BEAT)
Go.

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

The war council is still ongoing, a bit more weary.

LOVELACE
So who do we take out? Kepler?

EIFFEL
No. Kepler's a tactician, not a front-line soldier. Jacobi's a loose cannon, but even he's not packing H-Bombs every where he goes. The *real* problem -

HERA
No.

EIFFEL
Yes. The real problem is Maxwell. We can't have her turning you against us or this mutiny's over before it even starts.

HERA
She won't do that, Eiffel. Doctor Maxwell understands better than anyone how much of a violation that would be. She would hate herself.

HILBERT
That is *exactly* what she wants you to think.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... I don't think anyone can argue that Maxwell has shown herself to have good intentions -

Eiffel SNORTS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
... but... Eiffel has a point. She *can* change your programming. As long as she's around, there's a gun to your head.

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

HERA
Promise you won't hurt her.

There's WEARY SIGHS from Eiffel and Hilbert, but -

MINKOWSKI
We promise. Okay, so we go after Maxwell first.

HERA
Maxwell *and* Jacobi. At the same time.

MINKOWSKI
Isn't that a bit -

LOVELACE
No, it isn't. You haven't seen what he can do. Hera's right. Two teams, we'll take them out at the same time. Then we'll deal with Kepler.

EIFFEL
Okay, so we find them, corner them... and then what?

HILBERT
There is always the na-

MINKOWSKI
No.

EIFFEL
How many times do we have to tell you, you can't solve your problems by just... Oh. <u>Oh</u>.

HILBERT
What?

EIFFEL
Well... we're not gonna solve *this* problem by blowing it up, but maybe we **can** solve it by... Do we still have any of that knockout gas?

HERA
Actually...

HILBERT
No.

HERA
There's still two canisters of halothane gas wired to -

HILBERT
No. Without Hera online we cannot control their release from a distance. We would have to activate them via short-range remote.

MINKOWSKI
Not necessarily a deal-breaker. We can give each team one canister and one remote. Set one in the bridge -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 0700 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

Lovelace sets one canister on the inside of a console casing. It CHIRPS as it goes into "ARMED" mode.

LOVELACE
Set.

BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

MINKOWSKI
Another one in the tech wing -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 0700 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

Hilbert sets one canister of gas on the backside of a control column. Again, it CHIRPS as it gets "ARMED."

HILBERT
Set.

Off of that, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET ROOM - 2200 HOURS (FLASHBACK)

MINKOWSKI
It's a plan. Hilbert and I will wait in the tech wing and neutralize Jacobi. Lovelace, you and Eiffel will go after Maxwell.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 0910 HOURS (PRESENT)

A DOOR OPENS as Eiffel and Lovelace -

KEPLER
And where... do the two of you think you're going?

They stop dead in their tracks. Slowly, they turn around.

EIFFEL
Uh...

KEPLER
I don't recall giving you leave to go anywhere. Is there... something that I'm keeping you from?

EIFFEL
Uh... no?

He approaches them. His eyes go from one... to the other.

There's a LONG BEAT, before, finally -

KEPLER
Please tell Doctor Hilbert that... I appreciate him keeping an eye on the station systems. And that he should let me know if... *anything else* looks amiss. Understood?

LOVELACE
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Good. Dismissed.

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

They cross the doorway into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

And quickly SHUT the DOOR behind them. KA-THUNK.

BEAT.

And then they EXHALE MASSIVE SIGHS OF RELIEF.

EIFFEL
That was... too close.

LOVELACE
Yep.

EIFFEL
At the end there, he was kinda... You... you don't think he suspects anything, right?

LOVELACE
In for a penny, in for a pound.

EIFFEL
Love hanging with you, Captain.

He hits a COMMS SWITCH, and leans into the receiver.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Team Science Eagle?

And with a WHIP, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING SECTION - MEANWHILE

Hilbert and Minkowski perk up at the sound of the comm.

EIFFEL
(over comms)
This is Team Awesome. Thank you for your lovely diversion. Targets are on the move, phase two is a-go.

MINKOWSKI
(into comms)
Copy that -
(rolling her eyes)
- Team Awesome. En route to the Tech Wing now. Over and out.

HILBERT
So far, so good.

MINKOWKSI
Yeah. **So far.** C'mon...

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - 10 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel and Lovelace, in the corridor outside the bridge. Eiffel is TYPING into a small console. Through the wall, in the other room, we hear Maxwell TINKERING with Hera's mainframe.

EIFFEL
Okay, just one more moment and -

Lovelace brusquely GRABS HIS FACE, shutting him up.

LOVELACE
(low, deadly)
Maxwell is on the other side of that wall. **Maxwell. Has. Ears.** Keep... your... goddamm... voice down. Got it?

She's still holding his face when he muddles out -

EIFFEL
(low, whisper)
Gohd... id...
(she releases)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I think... I've got the overhead cam for the bridge.

LOVELACE
Good.

They lean into the console. Lovelace TAPS the screen.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Gas canister's in that console. We should wait til she gets closer.

EIFFEL
And then?

Lovelace holds up the canister's remote trigger.

LOVELACE
I hit the remote. The gas goes off. Pop goes the weasel.

And with a WHIP!, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - MEANWHILE

A DOOR CRACKS OPEN...

MINKOWSKI
Okay...

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN. Minkowski and Hilbert step through.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Coast is clear. Looks like we beat Jacobi.

HILBERT
Good. Gas canister is behind that control column. We should find a vantage point from which we can monitor the proceedings.

And with another WHIP!, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - MEANWHILE

Eiffel and Lovelace lean over the console, watching Maxwell.

EIFFEL
Okay, how about now?

LOVELACE
No. Let her get a bit closer...

Through the wall we hear Maxwell working.

EIFFEL
Okay... how about -

LOVELACE
Wait for it.

We faintly hear Maxwell TYPING, SOLDERING...

EIFFEL
Captain...

Lovelace's finger's on the trigger...

LOVELACE
Just... a little... bit...

Aaand... CLICK.

BEAT.

We still hear Maxwell working.

EIFFEL
Oh Goddammit...

LOVELACE
You... *have got to be kidding me*.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! Still nothing.

CLANG! Lovelace throws away the remote.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Stupid piece of...

EIFFEL
No gas?

LOVELACE
No gas. Ugh... *fine*. Onto Plan B.

EIFFEL
Uh... what's Plan B?

Lovelace takes SOMETHING HEAVY out of her pocket.

LOVELACE
We sneak up on Maxwell and hit her with this wrench. More than one way to pop a weasel.

EIFFEL
Oh God. Hera's gonna kill us...

WHIP! We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH CORRIDOR - MEANWHILE

Minkowski and Hilbert, in their hiding spot.

MINKOWSKI
What is taking him so long...?

HILBERT
Commander... I am glad that I have you alone for a moment.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, you really think this is the best time to - ?

HILBERT
Yes. This is important. Eiffel's plan has come together so far, but if the next phase does not -

MINKOWSKI
What makes you think it would not -

HILBERT
Because it is a plan and it is on this station and it is from Eiffel. Mathematical probability says that we have to talk about what may happen next.

MINKOWSKI
What are you saying?

WHIP! And we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Maxwell works on the various consoles. TYPING here... ADJUSTING CONTROLS over there...

MAXWELL
Hera... I know that you need time, but this is **not** the day for this. If you don't -

CREEEEEEAK.

Maxwell turns around: what was that? She looks around. Nobody's there. Nothing seems amiss. Oookay...

After a moment she resumes her work. TYPING...

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
(low, to herself)
If I reconnect your back up processor to the central processor, that may help to avoid any -

CLANG! Again, Maxwell turns around.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hello?
(BEAT)
Hello? Is anyone there?

BEAT. The station CREAKS.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Oookay... let's just get this done.

Slowly, she turns back to her work, and, with a WHIP!, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - MEANWHILE

Hilbert and Minkowski, still in hiding.

HILBERT
What I am saying is that we are facing an opponent that is not going to hesitate to kill us. We cannot afford to give them any advantage by -

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, stop. This is wrong.

HILBERT
No, you **need** to hear this. It is a likely possibility that the only way off this station may be -

MINKOWSKI
No, I mean - **this.** Something is wrong. He should be here by now. If Jacobi's not here, then where the hell is he?

As Hilbert realizes how right Minkowski is, WHIP! and we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Maxwell is still at the controls.

MAXWELL
Hold on Hera... I'm almost done... Just... one... more...

And that moment -

WHAM! The DOOR FLIES OPEN and SLAMS AGAINST THE WALL.

Maxwell EXCLAIMS in surprise, and turns around to find Eiffel and Lovelace, barely feet away from her.

Eiffel and Lovelace both EXCLAIM in surprise, turn around towards the door, and find -

JACOBI
Well, well, well... What have we got here...?

EIFFEL
Uh...

MAXWELL
Ja - Eiffel? Captain? When did you - what are you doing here?

EIFFEL
Well...

JACOBI
Oh, it looks like they were very quietly approaching you, Maxwell. From behind. With a very... heavy... wrench.

EIFFEL
Oh... that's just... it's just...

LOVELACE
Aren't you supposed to be somewhere, Jacobi?

JACOBI
You know, it's funny... lots of things that aren't supposed to be here are turning up in the bridge today. Me... you...

He holds up an object. Eiffel and Lovelace both blanche.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
This armed canister of halothane gas. Good thing I found this, or... things might have gotten a bit... ugly. Neither one of you would *happen* to know how that wound up here, would you?

EIFFEL
(sooo nervous)
Psssssshhhhhh... who? Us?

Eiffel LAUGHS the nervous laugh of the incredibly guilty.

After a moment, Jacobi joins in the LAUGHTER sarcastically.

EIFFEL
Well... *well...* you see... the - the thing about knockout gas is -

LOVELACE
Eiffel, shut up.
(BEAT)
All right. We're here. What are you going to do about it?

JACOBI
(chuckles)
Me? Oh, I'm not going to do anything. Captain. But... Maxwell...

Lovelace turns arou - CLANG! It's loud and awful. Metal on skull. Lovelace COLLAPSES - unconscious.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
I think that Maxwell's gonna sneak up behind you and hit you with a very heavy wrench. Night-night.

EIFFEL
(nervous laughter)
Uh... uh, I don't... suppose there's any chance that we could about this over a nice -

CLANG! Eiffel slumps over. Unconscious. Maxwell LETS OUT a WEARY SIGH as she stands over them.

JACOBI
You all right?

MAXWELL
Yeah. You?

JACOBI
Fine. Welp... Looks like we're doing this. Wasn't sure they were gonna have it in them.

MAXWELL
Kepler was right... they were getting jumpy about the contact event.

JACOBI
Ah well. It's not like any of them were gonna make it back to Earth anyway. Let's get these two back to the Colonel.

MAXWELL
Hang on. Let me just...

She goes back to the controls, INPUTS some commands. After a moment, we hear the SYSTEM POWER UP as Hera REBOOTS.

HERA
(robot voice)
System reboot complete. Reinitializing personality matr -

There's an ELECTRICAL CRACKLE and -

HERA (CONT'D)
(normal)
Yes, okay, okay. I'm back. How did everything -

MAXWELL
Hera? I just want you to know that I'm sorry in advance, okay?

HERA
Uh, sorry for - **whoa**, what the hell happened while I was -

But at that moment, something happens. An ELECTRIC SIGNAL runs through the system. Hera GLITCHES BADLY as she says -

HERA (CONT'D)
Ah! What the hell are you - ?

Hera GROANS, as if in great physical duress.

MAXWELL
No, no, shh... don't struggle. It's only going to make this harder.

For a moment the electrical signal RUNS, and then... DING!

MAXWELL
(softly)
If it makes you feel better... by the time I'm done, you're not going to remember any of this, okay?
(normal)
Hera, run a security lockdown protocol throughout the station.

And when Hera says -

HERA
Yes... Doctor Maxwell.

It sounds like every word is being forced out of her.

MAXWELL
And please pinpoint the location of Lieutenant Minkowski and Doctor Hilbert, if you would be so kind.

HERA
Yes... Doctor Maxwell.

Maxwell turns away from the console and towards Jacobi.

JACOBI
You good?

MAXWELL
Yep. I'm done.

JACOBI
Great. Lets go be monsters.

WOLF 359

"DESPERATE MEASURES"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1082 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 45.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - 1000 HOURS

For a moment there is silence. And then...

SLAP!

A small, groggy GROAN... and then -

SLAP!

KEPLER
(distant)
Eiffel... Eiffel...

EIFFEL
(low, out of it)
Wuuuhh...

And a moment later, much louder than the first two: **SLAP**!

Eiffel SNAPS into consciousness. He GASPS, FLINCHES, looks around, groggy, disoriented, taking in unusual surroundings.

KEPLER
Good morning. Wakey-wakey.

EIFFEL
Ah! Ah -

KEPLER
No, no, please don't get up.

As Eiffel moves, we hear CHAINS rattle and tense.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Not that you can, of course. Glad to see you're still with us.

EIFFEL
What is - what did you do with -

LOVELACE
I'm right here, Eiffel.

Eiffel glances over his shoulder. Behind him, chained to another chair, is Captain Lovelace.

EIFFEL
Captain! Are you all right?!

LOVELACE
I'm -

KEPLER
No, she's not. Neither one of you are. Just go ahead and permanently retire the words, "all right," from your vocabulary, Eiffel.

LOVELACE
I'm fine, Eiffel.

JACOBI
You're really not, you know.

Lovelace and Eiffel's attention snaps towards the door. There, they find both Jacobi and Maxwell.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
You both did something unspeakably stupid, and now you're in the hands of the enemy.

KEPLER
Specifically my hands. I don't know if I've ever shared this with you two, but I have a... *passion* for disciplining crew members. Right, Mr. Jacobi?

JACOBI
That's right, sir.

KEPLER
How creative can I get with those punishment? Doctor Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Very creative, sir.

KEPLER
That's right.

LOVELACE
If you expect us to be afraid -

Kepler CHUCKLES, interrupting her.

KEPLER
Please, Captain. At this point I cannot expect anything from you. That would be silly. First we need to... reevaluate our relationship.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Reacquaint ourselves with each other.

He steps away from them, gesturing at the room around them.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Neither one of you has been in **this** room before, have you? Welcome to the Urania's armory. Every kind of weapon to fight off any kind of hostile alien life form you could ever conceive of. Of course... in a pinch, most of these **also** make great disciplinary tools.
(chuckles)
Oh, the guys at the lab think of <u>everything</u>. Take this one...

He picks up... lets just say he picks up <u>SOMETHING</u>. Something that <u>whirrs</u>.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
This can cut straight through an iron bar.

He picks up... another <u>SOMETHING</u>. This one SPARKS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
This one's pretty cool - it **burns** right into neural pathways.

He picks up... Lord, something. <u>SOMETHING LARGE</u>.

KEPLER (CONT’D)
And this one... Oh, this one's got everything. Sharp. Cold. Loud. When I'm done with this one, Captain? <u>Then</u> we'll talk about expectations.

Eiffel, increasingly desperate, turns towards the door.

EIFFEL
Jacobi! Maxwell! Are you two just gonna stand there and WATCH this?

JACOBI
No, Eiffel. We're gonna go clean up <u>the rest</u> of your mess.

KEPLER
Mr. Jacobi is going to do me the favor of collecting your two remaining co-conspirators.

Lovelace SNORTS derisively.

LOVELACE
Yeah, *right*. Nobody knows this station like Alexander Hilbert. He knows every nook, cranny, hidden room - everything. And as back up he's got the only woman's who's ever turned outer space monster hunting into a recreational sport. You'll never see them coming... until all of a sudden there's a harpoon in your face, and you end up on the operating table of the finest medical sadist that Goddard Futuristics ever produced.
(BEAT)
Good. Luck.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Hmm... you know, Jacobi... she's right. This might be more difficult than we thought.

JACOBI
Yeah. If only we had some sort of... borderline omniscient super intelligence with absolute control over all the station's systems...

KEPLER
(snaps his fingers)
Oh wait... Maxwell?

MAXWELL
Just a moment...
(types some commands into a console)
Hera? Can you confirm that Lieutenant Minkowski and Doctor Hilbert are still in the Tech Wing?

HERA
(extremely strained)
Y-yes... Doctor...

Even more color drains from Eiffel and Lovelace's faces.

EIFFEL
Hera? What are you... ?

MAXWELL
Don't bother.
(types more commands)
Hera, are you still patched into the controls for the gas canister they planted into that room?

Eiffel and Lovelace realize where this is going.

EIFFEL
(low, horrified)
No...

HERA
Y-yes...

MAXWELL
And are the two targets within the deployment range of that canister?

HERA
Y-yes...

LOVELACE
Hera. Don't.

MAXWELL
She doesn't have a choice. If you would be so kind, Hera... please deploy that gas now.

HERA
(through gritted teeth)
I - I - I -

But at that moment, there's DING! from the console.

BEAT.

HERA (CONT'D)
Halothane deployment successful... Doctor.

MAXWELL
Can you confirm that both targets are incapacitated?

HERA
... yes.

That echoes for a BEAT.

KEPLER
What did I tell you? What did I tell on the *first day* I got here? No fuss.

EIFFEL
I knew it.

He's addressing Maxwell. With *vehemence*.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I knew underneath all that sparkle and charm you were just as bad as Hilbert. Hell, you're worse. You made Hera think you really cared, just to stab her in the back. Even Hilbert never sunk that low.

MAXWELL
It's not that simple. I'm working on -

EIFFEL
A bigger picture. Yeah. I've heard that one before.

KEPLER
Jacobi, get down to the Tech Wing and find our sleeping beauties. Kill whichever one you like least, get the other one up here.

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Maxwell, go back to the hangar bay, finish up the psi wave regulator's calibrations.

MAXWELL
Yes, sir. Things should go much more smoothly now.

KEPLER
Good. After all... We **are** on a schedule. So much to do, and so little time.

Off of that dark note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - MEANWHILE

Minkowski and Hilbert. Miraculously, not unconscious.

HILBERT
Well... it is safe to say that something has gone wrong.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Agreed.
(BEAT)
Do you... how are we not dead?

HILBERT
I am not sure.

HERA
(glitching badly)
One mo - one moment.

Her voice sounds strained and weak, like it's taking great effort for her to communicate with them.

HERA (CONT'D)
Ughh, for God's sake, just let me -

There's an ELECTRICAL CRACKLE.

HERA (CONT'D)
(much clearer)
Phew! There we go, that's **much** better. Holy God.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, what is going on?

HERA
Lots of things. Kepler has Eiffel and Lovelace in the armory of the Urania.

HILBERT
Alive?

HERA
For now. Maxwell has rewired my programming, she's inputting commands directly into my mainframe, telling me what to do.

MINKOWSKI
You mean like -

HERA
Like how she just told me to deploy the halothane gas on both of you.

Minkowski and Hilbert exchange puzzled looks.

MINKOWSKI
But you... I mean, we're not...

HERA
Yeah. Pretty cool, isn't it?

HILBERT
How are you... ?

HERA
Well, let's just say that you shouldn't spend five weeks teaching your A.I. how to isolate her physical systems if you don't want her to develop some... quirks.

HILBERT
(this is amazing)
You are selectively isolating her command functions...

HERA
And putting on a *very* convincing light show.

HILBERT
You are lying to someone in a command position. That should not -

HERA
(so proud)
What can I say? Top of the class.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, so you're immune to her commands? You can just ignore what she tells you?

HERA
(lets be clear)
No. I have been able to shake off everything she's given me **so far.** But it is **really difficult** and it **really hurts,** so I would appreciate it if you two could **get a move on.**

MINKOWSKI
Oh, right!

HERA
Also, Jacobi's on his way to your position, so you should *really* be gone by the time he gets there.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert? Suggestions?

HILBERT
We must stop Maxwell's attempts to interfere with A.I. system. That is biggest risk.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, where is - ?

HERA
Hangar bay. She's finishing up the calibrations for the psi wave regulator. I *strongly* suggest that you avoid the corridors, however. If you are anywhere within my visual sense horizon, I can't promise that I'll be able to hide you for much longer.

HILBERT
How the hell are we supposed to traverse through half the station without using any of the corridors?

MINKOWSKI
Oh ye of too little imagination... Don't you remember? I once spent three weeks chasing the Plant Monster through every inch of air duct in this place.

HILBERT
You remember the way?

MINKOWSKI
Oh yeah.

By now she's pulled herself up to one of the air vents. The GRATING COMES OFF with a KA-THUNK.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Just like a riding bicycle... Lets go.

And as they stare down the air vent, we - CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - 10 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel and Lovelace still in chairs. Still chained. Still un-tortured. Kepler paces in front of them.

KEPLER
You know, I'm disappointed in you two. You were doing *so well*! Cooperating... playing nice with the new kids. I really thought that you'd be around to catch a whiff of the finish line. Ah well, pity...

LOVELACE
Just *get on with it*. Torture's one thing, but could you <u>stop</u> with the <u>endless</u> speechifying?

Kepler's eyes narrow.

EIFFEL
(nervous whisper)
Hehe, Captain... ix-nay on the... oking the bear-pay.

KEPLER
That's right... you're funny. Funny Captain Lovelace.
(BEAT)
I'll remember that.

We can but imagine the EPIC STARING MATCH that ensues before - BUZZ! The comms go off. Kepler hits the switch.

JACOBI
(over comms)
Boss, we got a problem. Just got to the Tech Wing and there's no unconscious bodies over here.

LOVELACE
Oh. What a shame.

EIFFEL
(shut up you crazy lady)
Captain...

KEPLER
Jacobi, are you sure about that?

JACOBI
Yeah, I'm **real** sure. I'm guessing they weren't actually in the range of the gas.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Either way, it looks like they've gone into the air vents.
(peering into the vent)
You want me to get smoke grenades? See if I can flush them out?

For a moment Kepler thinks, weighing his options. Finally -

KEPLER
No. They could be anywhere by now. We're going to accelerate. Proceed directly to Contingency Echo.

JACOBI
Yes sir.

With that, the LINE CLOSES. Kepler turns to his captives.

KEPLER
Your friends are turning into a **real** headache. But... Let's see. We might still be able to wrap this up in time for lunch.

He smiles at them... and in a flash, his HANDGUN is pointed at the space between them.

He COCKS it. CH-CHCK!

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Now... who's feeling lucky?

Gulp? Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - MEANWHILE

Minkowksi and Hilbert pull themselves through an air vent.

MINKOWSKI
(exerting herself)
Here... it should only be about another... dozen yards. And then we make a left.

HILBERT
(also exerting)
Right...

They both advance. Then Hilbert stops, considering a vent.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
What?

HILBERT
The vent past this grating... it goes towards the engineering section, no?

MINKOWSKI
Yes. What about it?

HILBERT
The situation is considerably more dangerous than we anticipated. Do you have any armament more powerful than your handgun?

BEAT. No, she does not.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
As I thought. This may well be the last opportunity we get. It may not be prudent to let it pass.

Minkowksi takes a DEEP BREATH...

But at that moment... there's a LOUD SQUEAL OF FEEDBACK that goes through the air.

MINKOWSKI
Ahhh!

HILBERT (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

Some STATIC, CRACKLING... and then we have an open station-wide P.A. announcement:

KEPLER
(through P.A.)
Ladies and gentlemen and all mutineers at sea... This is your last chance to end this peacefully.

As Hilbert and Minkowski exchange a concerned look, there's a WHIP!, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - MEANWHILE

Kepler, still wielding a gun, talks into the receiver.

KEPLER
This has been really cute, but I think it's time we get serious, all right, Minkowski?

EIFFEL
Don't listen to him, Commander! He can go to hell!

KEPLER
He never did stop calling you Commander, did he? Adorable.

He SIGHS, as if genuinely taken in. Then:

KEPLER (CONT'D)
(deadly serious)
All right, here's the deal.

WHIP! We -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - MEANWHILE

KEPLER
(over P.A.)
You have five minutes to give me your unconditional surrender, or... I'm going to shoot one of your crewmates in the head.

MINKOWSKI
(to Hilbert)
Hilbert, do you think he really...?

KEPLER
Now, I know what you're thinking -

LOVELACE
Minkowski, don't give this piece of human garbage the satis -

Through the P.A. we hear a GUNSHOT: BANG!

There's a LONG BEAT.

KEPLER
That was a warning shot, Lieutenant. To make a point about not interrupting when I'm speaking.

WHIP! We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - MEANWHILE

The same terrifying, and terrified, scene.

EIFFEL
(now genuinely terrified)
Holy crap. You're crazy.

KEPLER
No, Eiffel. I'm just a man who wants to be taken seriously.
(clear his throat)
Now, as I was saying... how can I pick between these two? They're both so goddamn tragic in their own ways... Hmm...

He eyes both of them for a BEAT. Then...

KEPLER (CONT'D)
(very low, to himself)
Eeny... meeny... miny... moe... Catch... a tiger... by... the toe... If... he... hollers... let... him... go... Eeny... meeny... mi -

LOVELACE
Fuck you.

Whoa. That just happened. Kepler's eyes focus on Lovelace.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I'm not scared of you. I'm not intimidated by you. You know the only thing I feel when I look at you? Pity.

EIFFEL
(sotto)
Captain... this really isn't the time to -

LOVELACE
You are so... goddamn... pathetic. You know why? Because you talk and talk and talk about everything that you're doing for humanity -

EIFFEL
Captain, you should really -

LOVELACE
- and you haven't even realized. Well, guess what? You're *not* human. You lost - no, you sold - every piece of your humanity.

Kepler stares at her, implacable.

KEPLER
You're hilarious. On a multitude of levels.

LOVELACE
And that's just one more thing that I have... and you don't.

EIFFEL
Captain, no. Don't do -

LOVELACE
You're not even funny. You're just... nothing.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Well, that's a very nice speech, Captain. You know what I see when I look at you? I -

Lovelace SPITS at Kepler's face.

LOVELACE
Frankly, Colonel, I don't give a damn.

BEAT.

Then, Kepler CHUCKLES. He wipes away the spittle.

KEPLER
All right, then. You wanna go nuts? Let's go nuts.

EIFFEL
Oh God...

Kepler grabs the receiver again.

KEPLER
Minkowski? I'm gonna shoot Captain Lovelace in the head.

Shit. With a WHIP!, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - MEANWHILE

Minkowski and Hilbert listen, petrified.

KEPLER
(over P.A.)
And what did I say before? Five minutes? Nah, lets make it exciting. You have until I get to zero. **Ten.**

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert...

KEPLER
All the time in the world... all the time in the **nine.**

MINKOWSKI
Is this a trick? Will he shoot her?

HILBERT
Minkowski, I -

MINKOWSKI
Will he shoot her?

HILBERT
I warned. Many times.

KEPLER
Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, **eight.**

Minkowski GROWLS, frustrated, and, with a WHIP!, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - MEANWHILE

KEPLER
Anything? He-llooo?
(at Eiffel)
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Well, this is getting exciting, don't you think? **Seven.**

EIFFEL
You think this is going to work? You're not gonna to scare her by -

KEPLER
Three.

EIFFEL
Three?! What happened to -

LOVELACE
(soft)
Eiffel, shut up.

KEPLER
Coming up on the last chance Lieutenant... **two.**

EIFFEL
Captain... why did you - you didn't have to -

LOVELACE
Yes, I did. I did. It's fine.

She smiles at him. Sadly.

EIFFEL
Captain -

CLICK! A gun's hammer just got pulled back, and with a WHIP!, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - VENT SYSTEM - MEANWHILE

KEPLER
(over P.A.)
One. Going once... going twice...

MINKOWSKI
(low, desperate)
Goddammit all... Hilbert, we have to do something. We can't let him -

Over the P.A. we hear it:

BANG!

It echoes. Seemingly forever.

Then, finally -

KEPLER
You have thirty minutes to think about what you've done. Then... we'll talk about Officer Eiffel.

KSSSSHHHH. P.A. announcement's over.

For a BEAT they just float, stunned.

HILBERT
Min - Minkowski? Are you all right?
(BEAT)
We should -

KA-THUNK. By ways of reply, Minkowski KICKS OPEN the grate that Hilbert pointed out earlier. She turns to him, fire in her eyes.

MINKOWSKI
(deadly)
Get down there. **Go.** I'll deal with Maxwell. You get the napalm. But this... ends... **now.**

Even Hilbert is taken aback by her vehemence:

HILBERT
(tiny)
Yes... sir.

MINKOWSKI
Go.

And as he goes, now, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 10 MINUTES LATER

Maxwell at the main console for the psi wave regulator, making some adjustments.

MAXWELL
Hera, could we raise the base power level to eight, please?
(BEAT)
Hera? Could we raise the -

HERA
Yes! Sorry, sorry. I'm just...
could I have a moment?

MAXWWELL
No. I'm sorry, I know this is
difficult, but we are on a *very*
tight timetable. If we don't get
this operational, Colonel Kepler is
going to *huh* that's interesting...

She's just noticed something on her screen.

MAXWELL
Hera... why are you using so much
of your RAM right now?

HERA
(please don't ask me any
more questions)
Huh? Oh... that's just...

MAXWELL
You're at almost triple your
regular levels.

HERA
It must be all the new software
that you're running -

MAXWELL
No, the collar program should be
streamlining processes, not -

HERA
That's just a temporary spike in -

MAXWELL
(typing)
No, it's been at that rate for the
last hour and a half. It's
practically like you're running
every physical system on -

And that's when she gets it. BEAT.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Hera? What are you doing?

HERA
(sooo guilty)
Whatever you tell me. And nothing
else.

MAXWELL
Right...
(turning towards the console)
I'm just going to make some adjustments to your -

HERA
Oh, you don't have to -

MAXWELL
No, I think I **want** to.

HERA
All right, all right, you got me, you got me, but hang on.
(BEAT)
Before you do that... just... ask yourself this:
(BEAT, slow and steady:)
Do you know... that there's someone... standing right behind you... with a fire extinguisher?

MAXWELL
What?

CLAAANNNNG! Maxwell collapses, unconscious.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Hera. Well done.

HERA
No, no, **thank you**, Commander. Exquisite timing.

MINKOWSKI
Where can I find some rope?

HERA
Utility closet, behind you.

MINKOWSKI
Appreciate it.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMONY - 10 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel and Kepler. The former is in a state of shock.

EIFFEL
I... I can't believe... you **really...**

KEPLER
Yes, Officer Eiffel. I **really.**

BUZZZ! The comms goes off. Kepler HITS THE SWITCH.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Maxwell? What's going on down there?

MINKOWKSI
(over comms)
Hello, you disgusting piece of human garbage.

We hear as Kepler SHARPLY DRAWS BREATH. A bit of life seems to return to Eiffel.

KEPLER
Lieutenant! This is a bit ahead of schedule. We're not supposed to have our next chat until -

MINKOWSKI
Shut up. Here's how this is going to work. I have Maxwell tied up, **at gunpoint.** If you want to get her back, you release Eiffel. And that's that. You have ten minutes.

KEPLER
How about - ?

CLICK! Minkowski closes the comms line.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(sooo dry)
Now we have a hostage. Ho. Ho. Ho.

Kepler turns to him and... smiles.

Then... slowly, he begins to LAUGH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh...

KEPLER
He, he, he, he, hehehehehe!

EIFFEL
Uh, Colonel? Maybe you didn't hear.

KEPLER
Oh, I heard. You like chess, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Not... enormously.

KEPLER
Well, lets just say this: a good game of chess is sort of like the situation we're in right now. It's all about knowing what moves your opponent can make... and how to cut them off.

Off of that ominous pronouncement, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski stands over Maxwell, who is now 1. awake and 2. firmly tied to a chair that's bolted to the floor.

MAXWELL
This isn't going to work.

MINKOWSKI
Says the person tied to a chair.
(COCKS her gun)
With a gun pointed at her head.

MAXWELL
(sigh)
You really think you're going to win this? That you're going to out-maneuver Kepler?
(BEAT)
Hera, would you tell her how -

HERA
I'm not talking to you.

MAXWELL
(I'm surrounded by idiots)
Uhhh... fine. **Be that way.**

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can you tell us anything about what's happening inside the Urania?

HERA
No, sorry Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. What about Hilbert?

HERA
It looks like he's made it to the engineering section.

MINKOWKSI
And Jacobi?

JACOBI
(over comms)
Oh, he's doing quite well, thank you for asking.

Minkowski looks around, alarmed.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi? Where are - ?

JACOBI
Relax. I'm not standing behind you with a bit of lead pipe.
(pointed)
I wouldn't do that to someone. No, I'm in your comms room.

MINKOWSKI
... why?

JACOBI
Oh, because it's so much fun! You know, Eiffel doesn't really appreciate the *finnesse* of all this equipment. For example, fun fact:

At that moment, there's the BUZZ of an incoming COMMS line.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Did you know, that from here I can arrange the comms so you can hear an incoming call -

HILBERT
(over comms)
Minkowski, are you there?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Doctor.

HILBERT
Hello? Minkowski? Do you copy?

JACOBI
- but they can't hear you?

MINKOWKSI
Oh, come on...

HILBERT
If you can hear me, I am two minutes away.

MINKOWSKI
Very funny, Jacobi. What's your angle?

JACOBI
Angle? I don't have an angle. Don't you know: I'm *craazy* Jacobi, the loose canon. I just think it's funny to make your life that little bit more aggravating.

HERA
Why do I have trouble believing that...?

JACOBI
(clapping his hands together)
Now... Let's go over our current situation. Colonel Kepler has Eiffel, you have Maxwell. Very exciting.

MINKOWSKI
Would you stop this stupid -

JACOBI
And Doctor Hilbert is about... ninety seconds away from that hidden room in engineering where he and Lovelace have been stockpiling napalm.

That hangs in the air for a horrified BEAT.

The silence is only broken by Maxwell CHORTLING a bit.

MAXWELL
Oh, your face is priceless. I'm so sorry. Did you really think that we didn't know about that room? That we didn't have it under surveillance?

JACOBI
Because that's... well, actually, that's exactly the kind of idiotic mistake you **would** make.

At that moment, the COMMS CRACKLE again:

HILBERT
(over comms)
Minkowski, I am almost at the door.

MINKOWSKI
Hilbert, get away from there! Now!

JACOBI
Nope, sorry -
(with extra emphasis:)
- *Lieutenant*, but no dice. One way telephone, remember?

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi...

JACOBI
Fun fact number two: consider this possibility. Imagine there's a room, which you think is secret from everyone else... but which isn't. And so you start filling that room with - of all things - homemade explosives, because *that's smart!* And the entire time, you have no idea that right under the floor of that room... there's twenty pounds of C-4.

MINKOWSKI
No. He's lying.

MAXWELL
He's really not. Sorry.

JACOBI
C-4, which I can detonate remotely. For which, in fact... I'm now setting a timer for... a hundred seconds.

There's a CHIRP over the comms.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
There. Set.

HERA
No...

JACOBI
I mean, that would just be... one hell of a thing, wouldn't it?

BUZZ:

HILBERT
Minkowksi, I have now reached the target.

MINKOWSKI
GET OUT OF THERE!

JACOBI
(get it through your skull)
He can't hear you!

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can you tell him to -

HERA
No, Commander! It's that room! He's completely outside of my sense horizon!

MAXWELL
Oh. How sad.

JACOBI
Tragic. So here's the deal: you have about... ninety seconds to release Maxwell and give her your gun. If you don't... the Russian goes Chernobyl.

Again, the COMMS CRACKLE -

HILBERT
(over comms)
Preparing containers for mobilization.

MAXWELL
(pointed)
Now is the time to surrender.

Over the comms we hear a CHIRP.

JACOBI
Sixty seconds.

But instead of the sound of surrender, we hear the sound of a GUN COCKING.

MINKOWSKI
No. No. I am done getting pushed around by you all. Not this time. If you do this, Jacobi, I will shoot Doctor Maxwell.

MAXWELL
... no, she won't. Trust me.

MINKOWSKI
I will.

MAXWELL
Her hands are shaking. A lot.

HILBERT
(over comms)
First two containers are set...

MINKOWSKI
So the hell what? You break my people, I break yours!

JACOBI
The only one doing any breaking is you. You can get off this crazy train any time you want!

MAXWELL
Just put the gun down...

HERA
Lieutenant...

JACOBI
Fifteen seconds.

HILBERT
Almost done. Just a little more time.

HERA
(urgent)
Lieutenant. Put the gun down.

MINKOWSKI
No. I am not giving up again.

JACOBI
Eight seconds. Here we go.

MAXWELL
How stupid are you - ?

HILBERT
Minkowski, do you copy? Can anybody hear - ?

And then the world goes mad.

We hear it through the comms. AN **EXPLOSION**. ALL CONSUMING. The station SHAKES from the blast.

And just a tiny moment later:

BLAM!

Both blasts ring out for a BEAT. Finally, gradually...

HERA
Lieu - Lieutenant... what did you do?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
What I had to, Hera.

She sounds steadier, and colder, than we have heard her in a very long time.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
This is war.

JACOBI
(over the comms)
You...

There is a world of hatred packed into that word.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
You... **killed...** how **could** -

HERA
QUIET.

And on that word, her voice is low and monstrous, CRACKLING WITH ELECTRICITY. Instantly the comms line closes.

BEAT.

HERA (CONT'D)
What now?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Now... we finish this madness.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ARMORY - MEANWHILE

Kepler and Eiffel, much as we last saw them.

Around them they hear OMINOUS RUMBLING, the aftershocks of an explosion.

KEPLER
Sounds like Jacobi has things under control.

EIFFEL
... are you nuts?
(BEAT)
Colonel, look around you. Everything is falling apart. What do you think is happening?

KEPLER
A controlled demolition.

EIFFEL
Yeah, not anymore. I don't even know what's going on over there, but I *know* this has gotten really friggin' far from controlled. This is a wildfire.

At that moment, there's a SOUND. BIG. MECHANICAL. We hear machines POWER DOWN and STOP. A moment later, the structure under their feet JERKS and SHAKES.

Kepler looks around him, then back at Eiffel.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(deadpan)
Time to get your lyre, Nero: Rome is **burning.**

Kepler rolls his eyes, but at that moment another TREMOR runs through the structure.

Kepler hits the comms:

KEPLER
Lieutenant! What is happening?

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
The end of all this crap.

KEPLER
Care to be more specific?

MINKOWKSI
Hera and I just down all the station engines.

That wipes the smirk off Kepler's face. For the first time in the entire episode, he sounds unnerved.

KEPLER
You... did <u>what</u>? Minkowski, do you have any idea what that will -

MINKOWKSI
Oh, I know <u>exactly</u> what it's going to do. You wanna go up to the red line? Let's go.

The station SHAKES again. A little louder

KEPLER
This is madness.

EIFFEL
Well it's been kind of a topsy-turvy day.

KEPLER
Shut up.

Kepler hits a different switch on the comms panel.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Jacobi?

JACOBI
(barely restrained fury)
Yes, sir?

KEPLER
Can you get to the -

JACOBI
Yes.

KEPLER
Take her out. Full liberties, just get it done.

JACOBI
My pleasure.

Kepler hits the comms switch again.

KEPLER
Lieutenant, without the engines, we are going to succumb to the star's gravitational pull. If you don't stop this -

MINKOWSKI
We are all going to die in unspeakable pain. Yes. Desperate measures.

RUMBLE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera and I calculate about another... two minutes before we're past the point of no return. That's how long you and Jacobi have to surrender. Check.

RUMBLE. We hear metal RATTLE around them.

KEPLER
Hera: this is a direct order from the station command officer. **Restart the engines. Now.**

HERA
(strained)
No.

KEPLER
What?

HERA
(so much effort)
No. I'm not taking that order. I don't care how much it hurts, how fast I have to spin this code, but no.

KEPLER
Your programming -

HERA
Will break me, sooner or later, yes. But for two minutes? *I can stick it out*.

RUUUMBLE. LOUDER. NASTIER.

EIFFEL
You feel that?

KEPLER
Quiet.

EIFFEL
You wanted to meet some aliens? Well get ready, we're about to get up close and -

KEPLER
QUIET!!

RUMBLE. Some metal starts to TWIST and CRUNCH around them. Kepler gnashes his teeth.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
No. You're not going through with this.

MINKOWSKI
I already have!

KEPLER
No. You are not going to sacrifice Eiffel and -

MINKOWSKI
Three people have died today! This has gone far enough! Either **no one** else dies...

EIFFEL
Or we all go. Amen, Commander.

MORE RUMBLING. The station sounds like it's coming apart at the seams.

HERA
One minute.

For a LONG, SILENT BEAT things hang in mid air.

Finally -

EIFFEL
Don't do this.
(BEAT)
I get it. You don't stop. You don't surrender. You push. Well guess what: this is where the universe pushes back.

Kepler watches him, eyes narrow.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And of all the stupid ways someone can gamble with their life, let me tell you: there is a special place in hell reserved for those **dumb** enough to die trying to out-stubborn Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowksi!
(BEAT)
So stop this, or you are going to die, knowing that you were only hours away from your precious contact event. Get your head out of your ass... and start thinking about the big picture.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

Then we hear a CLINK! as the lock on Eiffel's chains UNLOCK. A moment later, Kepler hits the SWITCH on the comms.

KEPLER
Jacobi. Stand down.

JACOBI
WHAT? Sir, I'm not -

KEPLER
You are not going to defy a direct order. Stand down.

JACOBI
... yes, sir.

He hits another switch on the comms.

KEPLER
Minkowski? I just released officer Eiffel, and surrendered my firearm to him. Mr. Jacobi should surrender to you momentarily. Now, stop this thing.

As Eiffel breathes a COLOSSAL SIGH OF RELIEF, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 10 MINUTES LATER

We hear the sound of WHIRRING MACHINES and REBOOTING SYSTEMS as the station returns to stable orbit.

HERA
(phew)
All right.... Engines are at full capacity, and we are back in stellar-synchronous orbit.

MINKOWSKI
Good. It's... it's finally over.

HERA
Yes, I... I think it is.

Over the open COMMS channel, we hear Kepler's COLD LAUGHTER.

KEPLER
Over? Oh, Minkowski... Half the crew is dead. Half of the remaining crew are now prisoners of war. Your station has just undergone a massive explosion and extreme gravitational turbulence. And, oh yes, you're still scheduled to experience the most significant alien contact in recorded history... in about sixteen hours.

Once again, he LAUGHS. High. Cold. Cruel.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
No... it's not over at all. You wanna be in charge of this mess? You got it.
(BEAT)
Good luck... Commander.

WOLF 359

"BOLÉRO"

by

GABRIEL URBINA

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1083 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 46.

BEGIN RECORDING:

FADE IN:

As the opening credits end, the soundtrack fades into SILENCE. For a moment, all is quiet and still.

Then we hear it... Faint at first, but growing... pulsing...

Classical music... notes running up through the air...

Ba... ba da ba da ba da ba ba ba... ba da ba da.... da da...

... we may recognize it, we may not... for now it just plays... ghostly and distant... building slowly... fading in and out...

And then we hear the voice... distant...

MINKOWSKI
(ghosty and echo-y)
Eiffel...?
(BEAT)
Eiffel... ? Are you there?

And with a soft WOOSH! the world comes into focus, and we realize that we're in -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 1300 HOURS

Eiffel at the controls. Minkowski just entered the room. The music is coming through the intercom speakers.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Oh! Yes! Sorry, Commander I was...
I was a million miles away.

MINKOWSKI
It's doing that again?

EIFFEL
(adjusting the controls)
Yeah, it's... coming and going. But it's like three months ago with the Tchaikovsky. When it's here, it's **here.** It's beaming right into the speaker functions.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, is it giving you any trouble?

HERA
No. Or... at least not yet.

At that moment, the MUSIC CUTS OFF. Both Eiffel and Minkowski glance at the controls for a moment.

EIFFEL
It's still pretty weak - case in point. But...

HERA
It's only gonna get stronger.

EIFFEL
Baby's gonna grow. First sign of the oncoming Alien-pocalypse.

MINKOWSKI
Lord...

By this point it should become apparent that these three people are completely **fried.** Both in terms of energy and emotion, they are running on fumes.

HERA
How did it go on your side, Commander? Any luck?

Minkowski lets out a LOW, FRUSTRATED BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
No. The Urania's engineering is... it's a mess. Most of the systems aren't responding at all -

KSSSHH! With a brief CRACKLE OF STATIC the music comes back on. Eiffel SMACKS the console.

EIFFEL
Thank you, we get it! The big bad wolf's coming, we don't need a friggin' overture to build up the suspense!

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
How about you two? Any progress on getting Hera transferred to the Urania's central computer?

EIFFEL
It's... kinda slow going. We've been trying to figure out how Hera can interface directly with the mainframe but... I don't know. Honestly, this stuff's a few light years beyond my ken, even if you throw in the Malibu Dream Home.
(BEAT)
I... I don't want to say this, but I'm starting to think this may be the sort of thing for which we would need -

HERA
We'll figure it out.

Minkowski takes that in. Silent. Steely. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
And this, this stupid music isn't helping! It's... I don't know. Hypnotic or something. The more I listen to it, the more I...

They listen to it for a BEAT, then -

KEPLER
Boléro.

At this point it suddenly becomes clear that Kepler is also present. He's in the back of the room, handcuffed to a console. Eiffel and Minkowski's attention snaps to him.

EIFFEL
What?

KEPLER
It's called **Boléro.** By Maurice Ravel. Premiered in 1928. The entirety of the piece is just two melodies, developed over seventeen different instrumentations and -

EIFFEL
I'm sorry, but what do you think you're doing? You're not at the Grand Ol' Opry, pal. We've got you chained up here strictly for Q and A purposes.

KEPLER
Just trying to help, Officer Eiffel.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You seemed so intrigued by the musical accompaniment, I thought -

MINKOWSKI
Silence.

BEAT. Kepler smiles at her.

KEPLER
But of course. If the Commander wishes for silence, then silence she shall have.

Eiffel and Minkowski both stare him down, seething.

After a BEAT, they turn back towards each other -

EIFFEL
(lower)
So what are we thinking? Keep trying to see if we can get the Urania up, up and away?

MINKOWSKI
(also lower)
What's the other option?

EIFFEL
I don't know... prep for alien contact? In whatever ways we can?

HERA
And what ways are those?

The ensuing silence is eloquent. After a BEAT -

KEPLER
If I were you -

EIFFEL
Shut up.

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

KEPLER
- I would **really** see about getting that psi wave regulator up and running.

Eiffel GROWLS, frustrated, as he turns to Kepler. At the same time, the MUSIC CUTS OUT again.

EIFFEL
Why? Does it like... open up a portal to the mothership?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Set up a homing beacon so the Skrull Armada knows what to aim for? What?!

BEAT.

KEPLER
You'll **want** to have it running.

EIFFEL
(gritted teeth)
Why?

KEPLER
Trust me.

EIFFEL
No.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, enough! He's just trying to distract you. Kepler, you want to be of help?

KEPLER
But of course, sir. Whatever I can do to be of assistance to sir during sir's hour of need.

MINKOWSKI
Cut it out. We need the Urania space worthy before the contact event. How do we make that happen?

Kepler CHUCKLES a bit.

KEPLER
You don't.

MINKOWSKI
Kepler...

KEPLER
Let me rephrase: you can't. Because of two major obstacles.
(holds up one finger)
Number one: the controls are on a biometric lockdown. Navigation won't engage without verifying my DNA. Fortunately, I'm all too happy to contribute a bit of myself to this cause, so that shall only be a momentary inconvenience.
(two fingers)
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
But number two... the Urania's VX5 engine won't respond unless it can confirm a *minimum* level of structural stability. You may have forgotten in all the excitement, Commander... but when we found you, the Hephaestus was rotting. Jacobi and Maxwell spent the first three weeks here molding parts of the Urania into the Hephaestus. The two craft are fused into each other now, and they're not coming apart without a lot of effort. I suppose you... <u>might</u> be able to pull that off. If you want it bad enough.
(smiles)
Better work <u>fast</u> though...

Minkowski and Eiffel stare at him for a BEAT. Finally -

EIFFEL
Son of a bitch! You have got to be kidding me.

KEPLER
What can I say...

We hear a DOOR OPEN.

MINKOWKSI
Eiffel, take care of him. Get him back to solitary.

EIFFEL
Where are you going?

MINKOWSKI
Where do you <u>think</u>? I'm going to try to see if I can get this ship space worthy in time to save our asses!

EIFFEL
Commander... wait.

MINKOWSKI
<u>What</u>?

Bit louder than she meant it to be. It echoes for a BEAT.

EIFFEL
I was thinking... we should take a moment today.

MINKOWKSI
A *moment*.

EIFFEL
To... you know. Have a funeral.

BEAT. Minkowski lets out a LOW BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you really think that now is - ?

EIFFEL
No, of course it's not, but... who knows what's going to happen? I think we should do it. Before we can't.

MINKOWSKI
Were you not listening? We can't waste any time with -

EIFFEL
It won't take long. **Please.**

MINKOWSKI
Ugh, **fine.** Do it.

She starts to push past him, but -

EIFFEL
Great! Thank you. And, uh... you'll say something?

MINKOWSKI
What?

EIFFEL
You know, as the Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I -

EIFFEL
I know, I know: it's weird. But I also think we owe it to Lovelace, Hilbert, and Maxwell -

MINKOWSKI
I don't know that -

HERA
Uhh... <u>excuse me</u>?

Minkowski and Eiffel both look up.

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
I think there must have been a power surge or something, because I thought I heard something crazy.
(BEAT)
Lets be clear here: we are going to have a funeral... for Captain Lovelace. That's it.

EIFFEL
Uhh... don't you think that -

HERA
That what? That we're going to spend one second on people who thought it was okay to stick their fingers in my brain? No, I don't.
(BEAT)
We don't have funerals for animals.

EIFFEL
I... kinda get what you're saying -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- but isn't this going a bit too far with -

HERA
No, you clearly don't understand if you're asking -

MINKOWKSI
ENOUGH!

That gets their attention.

MINKOWSKI
(low)
Get out.

EIFFEL
Uh, what?

MINKOWKSI
Get out. Get out and take Kepler, too.

EIFFEL
Uh, Commander, are you all right?

MINKOWSKI
(no)
Fine. Go.

EIFFEL
Uh, sure. What do you want me to do after I - ?

MINKOWSKI
I don't know. Whatever you want.

EIFFEL
But wait, are we still -

MINKOWSKI
(snap)
Would you just go already?!

Eiffel FLINCHES at the sudden vehemence. But he gets the message.

EIFFEL
(low)
Aye, aye, Commander...

He moves off, towards Kepler. We hear a CLINK! as the handcuffs come off from console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
C'mon Colonel... let's get you back to your cell.

And with that, Eiffel takes Kepler and both EXIT through a DOOR, CLOSING it behind them.

BEAT.

And then Minkowski collapses. She lets a SIGH that runs through her entire body. She buries her face in her hands. And there she stays for a LONG BEAT.

Until we hear a RUSTLE in front of her.

Minkowski pulls her hands back. Looks up.

MINKOWSKI
I am sorry. There are no words to express how sorry I am.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
It's not your fault. You did the best you could.

MINKOWSKI
So the hell what? You're still dead! I...
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
I wanted to get you back to Earth. I wanted to give you that so badly. You deserved that. You'd earned that.

LOVELACE
It's not about what we deserve, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Well it should be! You were so strong! So smart! You made it through so much! I - I never thought -

LOVELACE
Not how it works. I knew what I was doing. And so did you. You held the line. It was solid soldiering.

MINKOWSKI
No, I got people killed. I -

LOVELACE
You did what you had to. To protect your people.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Not all of them.

LOVELACE
That's war. All you can do is make sure you get the rest of them home.

BEAT. Minkowski voice shakes as she says:

MINKOWSKI
You were... you were so far gone. I... I wanted to know you could do it. That you could make it home.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Maybe I could have.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Maybe...

Off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

Over the silence, slowly, the familiar notes of Boléro fade in, before we -

FADE INTO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - 1 HOUR LATER

Eiffel moves into the corridor outside the observation deck, talking to Hera as he goes.

EIFFEL
Hera?

HERA
What?

EIFFEL
You really don't think that -

HERA
That what?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I don't know.
(BEAT)
People died. I feel like we at least owe them -

HERA
(scoff)
The only thing I owe Doctor Hilbert is a hole in his head.

EIFFEL
Okay, Hilbert, I kind of get. But... I thought that Maxwell was your friend.

BEAT.

HERA
Yeah. Me too. I make a lot of mistakes.

EIFFEL
So does that mean that - ?

HERA
I don't want to talk about this right now.

EIFFEL
Uh... well, we kinda have to? I mean, we need to settle this pretty much... now.
(BEAT)
Hera?
(BEAT)
Uh, hello?

No answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh for God's... could you not?
(BEAT)
This is real mature!

He waits again. Still no answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ugh... You know what? *Fine*.

Well, that went well. Eiffel YANKS open the door and we go into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS

Jacobi is chained up in Hilbert's old accommodations. Eiffel enters. **Boléro** plays through the speakers for a few moments, then cuts out.

JACOBI
Oh, look. A visitor. How fun.

EIFFEL
Jacobi, I -

JACOBI
No.

EIFFEL
(blink, blink)
... no?

JACOBI
Whatever stupid thing you're going to ask me to help with... no.

EIFFEL
Oh for God's - do you think this is a joke?

JACOBI
Yeah. Cosmic.

Eiffel EXHALES... he's close to the end of his rope.

EIFFEL
Look, we're having a funeral. For... well, I don't know. For everyone, I hope. You should be there. Even if you have to be there in handcuffs.

JACOBI
Why?

EIFFEL
Because I know what it's like to not get a chance to say goodbye. And I'm not doing that to anyone. Not today.
(BEAT)
And... I don't think that you're past the point of not caring. Not yet.

BEAT.

Then, Jacobi CHUCKLES DARKLY.

JACOBI
Eiffel, Eiffel, Eiffel... can't get anything past you, can we? No... I care. *Of course* I care. You know what I care about? The <u>one</u> thing that I find myself still giving damns about?
(low, deadly)
You. Killed. Maxwell. That's it. Nothing else. So you and Minkowski and Hera can go screw yourselves. I don't care.

EIFFEL
Jesus, man... how -

JACOBI
Are you about to ask how I got this way? Because the answer to that is, "Your Commander shot my friend."
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
Leave me alone.

Eiffel hesitates for a BEAT. But then -

EIFFEL
No. You know what? No. I say, "No," to your "No." All day long I have been going out of my way to be the single, solitary voice of... not even sanity, just **decency**, and all I've gotten for it is people yelling at me! Well, you know what, I've had it up to here!

JACOBI
What the -

EIFFEL
(runaway train)
SHUT UP! You wanna turn into Dark Vengeance Jacobi? Knock yourself out starting tomorrow. But right now? Right now you're putting on your handcuffs, you're coming to my funeral, and you're gonna like it! I mean, you're gonna feel really sad and cry and stuff! Got it?!

Off of that note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ENGINEERING - 1 HOUR LATER

We come in on the sound of WELDING. Minkowski is still desperately working to get the engines systems working.

As she does -

HERA
Commander?

The WELDING STOPS, Minkowski looks up.

MINKOWKSI
Yes, Hera?

HERA
The funeral is going to start in an hour. If you would like to be there in time, you should... maybe get back to the Hephaestus.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
I'm not going, Hera.

HERA
Commander?

MINKOWSKI
I mean... what the hell would I do there?

HERA
I think that Eiffel would like you to say -

MINKOWSKI
What? Who can I talk about? The one that died on my watch? The one that I sent to his death? Or the one that I killed? No, I... I can't.
(BEAT)
I can't.

BEAT.

HERA
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
Go away, Hera. Let me work. I need to do this.

BEAT.

HERA
All... right. I'll... leave you alone.

The WELDING RESTARTS. After a moment, there's the familiar sound of a MENTAL WOOSH! (like we heard in **Episode 41**) and we -

CUT TO:

I/E. MENTAL SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Hera's mental space. For this scene, we'll hear her without her usual vocal filters.

We hear her take a DEEP BREATH, frustrated. Tired. Exhausted.

Then -

MAXWELL
(sighing)
It'd be nice, wouldn't it? To just... write over all these pesky bad memories?

Out of the mental aether, the figure of Doctor Maxwell materializes.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
I can *totally* rewrite a memory, remember?

HERA
Maxwell...

MAXWELL
No pun intended.
(BEAT)
You really outdid yourself back there, Hera. I'd be proud. Probably. If I wasn't, you know...

Maxwell makes a CREAKING NOISE as she gestures across her throat. A moment later, we hear her CHUCKLES.

HERA
(how dare you)
You said it would get better. You said that's what being a person is. We make mistakes and we get better.

MAXWELL
I know.

HERA
So what happened?! Were you lying?! Was everything you did for me all just part of some... secret evil plan?!

MAXWELL
(gently)
What do you think?

HERA
I don't know! I can't - you *saw* what they did to me! I thought you were different and then you still -

MAXWELL
Yes, I did. I made a choice.

HERA
Why?

MAXWELL
Why do you think?

HERA
Ugh, stop saying that! I am asking because *I don't know*! You did so much for me and *to* me and *I still have no idea who you are!*

MAXWELL
... were.

HERA
Whatever! How is that even possible?! How could you just... just do *that* and then be gone?!
(BEAT)
That's not rhetorical. I want an answer.

MAXWELL
Hera... I'm afraid you're not going to get one. Not a real one. All you get is a story. Maybe I questioned the orders but I was afraid to go against Kepler. Maybe I cared about my job more than I cared about you. Maybe I saw you as a friend, but the Colonel and Daniel were family. In the end, it's not about what I thought. Not anymore. It's about what you choose.

HERA
What are you talking about? What choice?

MAXWELL
Same choice you're making a thousand times a second, Hera: what are you going to do now?

And with that question hanging in the air, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1500 HOURS

The DOOR OPENS. Eiffel comes in, carrying something.

As he does, the speakers CRACKLE, and we, once again, hear Ravel's **Boléro** come through them. Eiffel looks up, annoyed.

EIFFEL
Don't you start. I'm not in the mood.

He slumps down.

HERA
... Eiffel? Could I... talk to you? For a moment?

EIFFEL
Not... not now, Hera. Not a great time.

HERA
Where were you? What were you doing?

EIFFEL
Oh... just picking up some funeral supplies from the Urania's hold.

HERA
Supplies?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah. Digging out my secret weapon.

HERA
... why do you need a weapon at a funeral?

EIFFEL
To survive it.

HERA
(so unnerved)
What does it do?

EIFFEL
What *doesn't* it do? Takes the sunrise... sprinkles it with dew... makes the world taste good.

He lifts the thing he was carrying, and, for the first time, we hear the distinct CLINK of a bottle.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, the wonders of wine.

HERA
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Petrus '03...
(shrug)
Good year, I hope.

HERA
Eiffel, you... I really think you should put that down.
(BEAT)
You don't need this.

EIFFEL
HAH! What do you know about -
(DEEP BREATH)
Look: no one else is interested in the "Being a Human" thing tonight, so it's up to me to give it the ol' college try. And that's just fine, but you know what? I'm not getting by without some help from my friends. And since my new pals aren't returning my calls, I'm gonna go hang out with some old ones!
(BEAT, small:)
I killed them, Hera. And if I gotta do this then I gotta do this, but I'm gonna have my spinach before I go out there to get clobbered.

HERA
You didn't kill anyone.

EIFFEL
I did. I told them not to use the napalm. I was all, "*No, no, no, use my dumb plan! It'll be so much better! What could possibly GO WRONG*?!"

That last bit came out a bit angrier than he meant it to. It ECHOES for BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I made them change their plans. I sacrificed them because I didn't want Kepler, Jacobi, and Maxwell to die... and I didn't even get that right. That's what's wrong with handcuffs.

HERA
That is not how this -

EIFFEL
(very small)
Hera... I'm a drunken mess whether I drink or not, so I might as well have a cup. Or six.

THUNK! Out went the cork. SCH-LUP! In went a straw.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Cheers.

HERA
You can't just -

EIFFEL
See you on the other side, Hera.

BEAT.

And then -

GULP. GULP. GULP.

Finally he lets go of the bottle. He SIGHS with profound relief and abandon. He seems to melt into that sigh.

BEAT.

HILBERT
That stuff is going to kill you.

He looks up.

EIFFEL
Leave me alone, Doc. I got enough ghosts.

HILBERT
As your doctor, I cannot recommend -

EIFFEL
You're not my doctor. I'm not your patient.

HILBERT
No? Then what are we then?

EIFFEL
We're... were... I don't know. Complicated.

HILBERT
Why the long face, Officer Eiffel? I would have thought this would come as a relief. You are finally rid of me for good. Is not what you wanted?

EIFFEL
I never wanted you to -

BEAT.

HILBERT
How else did you think it was going to end? Did you think I would ever give up? Stop trying?

EIFFEL
You were... I don't know. I could feel the conflict within you!

HILBERT
That is just a movie, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(what's the word?)
You were... changing. Growing. Learning.

HILBERT
Evolving.
(BEAT)
Was I?

EIFFEL
Yes.
(BEAT)
I don't know. Maybe.
(BEAT)
I wanted to believe you could come back to the light side. That even someone who had done as much bad as you, who had screwed as many lives as you could one day...

He trails off. BEAT.

HILBERT
Well... we will never know now.

EIFFEL
Yeah...

He looks down at his hand.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
God, what am I doing?

THUNK! He corks the bottle again. And with that, both the scene and music FADES, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 20 MINUTES LATER

They are gathered. Eiffel stands in the front. Jacobi (handcuffed) is off to the side. Kepler (also handcuffed) hovers in the back.

In front of them...

EIFFEL
So...
(BEAT)
Here we are.

JACOBI
Yeah.
(BEAT)
No Minkowski, huh?

EIFFEL
Yeah, I... guess not.
(BEAT)
Well, uhh... I guess we'll start.
(clears his throat)
Dearly beloved and... enemy prisoners, we are gathered today to say goodbye to... Captain Isabel Lovelace. Et cetera, et cetera.

JACOBI
That's her?

EIFFEL
Yeah. I was, uh... able to get a body bag from the lab.

JACOBI
Right.

HERA
(tiny)
So... how does this work? What happens now?

EIFFEL
Well now we... I don't know. We say things. About her. About why she was so... her.
(BEAT)
Anyone want to start? Jacobi?

JACOBI
What do you want me to say?

EIFFEL
I don't know! Just... uhh, never mind. Colonel?

KEPLER
I'm just here for the food.

EIFFEL
Uuggghhhh.

HERA
So we say things and then what? What does that do?

EIFFEL
Hera, it just -

HERA
Is it going to make it better?

EIFFEL
I don't know if better is -

HERA
Easier?

EIFFEL
Hera, could you just -

HERA
Just what, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Just not be so -

HERA
So <u>what</u>? How does our doing this make it better?

EIFFEL
That's not the way it works!

HERA
Then how <u>does</u> it work?

Something in her tone stops Eiffel cold. As she talks she grows more and more emotional, glitching badly over -

HERA
Explain it to me! Talk to me about this like I'm three years old, because - in case you have all forgotten - I **am** three. I haven't done this before. So help me understand. And don't patronize me, because I get the fundamental change of energy and the randomization of their atoms, I <u>get that</u>. The people who put things into my head, oh, made all of that <u>really clear</u>. But they gave me nothing on how to -

She falters for a moment. Furious. Sad.

HERA (CONT'D)
Just tell me: how do I stop thinking about this? Because right now I can't think of anything <u>other</u> than the fact that they're broken and I can't fix them. Tell me how I stop thinking about them, even the one that I hated, and yes, I <u>hated</u> him, and I can't even decide if I hated her or not, because what is happening inside my head right now is wrong and stupid and wrong.
(BEAT)
Just tell me why they have to be gone.

That's a VERY LONG BEAT that follows that one. Finally -

EIFFEL
Hera, we don't... I don't know that there's... That's not what this -

MINKOWSKI
To make the fact that **we're** not gone yet important.

They all turn around to find her at the entrance to the bay.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
They're gone... so that we never forget how important it is that we're still here.

EIFFEL
Commander! You -

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel. I'm here.
(lower)
I'm here.

EIFFEL
Uh, do you... want to...

Minkowski steps forward. Looks down.

MINKOWKSI
Isabel Lovelace is... the kind of soldier... leader... person that I hope to be one day. Fierce. Loyal. Kind. Even in total dark she never lost her way. Be at peace, Captain... we won't forget you.

HERA
Amen.

EIFFEL
Hera...? Is it okay, if we -

HERA
Yes. Do it. Just... do it.

EIFFEL
Okay. Jacobi? Is there anything you want to say? About Maxwell?

BEAT.

JACOBI
Alana Maxwell was special. She was a brilliant scientist, and a gift of a friend. More patient and understanding than... any of us deserved.
(BEAT)
Thank you, Alana.

HERA
Amen.

BEAT.

Eiffel steps forward.

EIFFEL
Hilbert was...
(clears his throat)
Alexander Hilbert was... Ah, screw it. Doctor Hilbert was a monster. He did things that no one should ever do. But he sacrificed every part of himself for what he thought was best. Best for everyone. And he never looked back.
(BEAT)
See you later, Doc.

BEAT.

Minkowski looks over her shoulder:

MINKOWSKI
Do you want to say anything?

KEPLER
I'm good.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
With... heavy hearts... and fond memories... we bid farewell to Doctor Alana Maxwell, Doctor Alexander Hilbert, and Cap -

But she is interrupted, because at that moment:

BOOOOOM! Something HITS the station, and the Hephaestus is ROCKED.

At once, an ALARM GOES OFF, blaring loudly.

EIFFEL
Ahhh!

MINKOWSKI
Goddam - Hera? Situation report! Now!

HERA
(robot voice)
Radiological alert. Radiological alert. Stellar flare imminent.

EIFFEL
Oh, you gotta be - can't we have a moment to grieve?!?

The answer, apparently, is "No," as another BLAST ROCKS the Hephaestus. Everyone GROANS and EXCLAIMS as the floor under them BUCKLES.

MINKOWSKI
Hera! Adjust course to minimize damage!

HERA
(gritted teeth)
Already on it, Commander! I'm doing my best, but - AHH!

BOOM! CRUNCH! Once again, the station SHAKES.

EIFFEL
What the hell is going on?

JACOBI
Oh, for God - what do you think, numb-nuts!?

As if on cue, at that moment, **Boléro** begins to play over the station's loudspeakers.

JACOBI
That answer enough for you?

EIFFEL
But the contact event's not schedule to happen for another six hours!

KEPLER
Well... give or take.

Hearts sink. Slowly, all heads turn towards Kepler.

EIFFEL
... excuse me?

KEPLER
Six...ish hours. There is a margin of error to these things. On an unrelated note... I suggest you hang onto something.

BOOOM! CRASH! The biggest wave yet! Everyone is rocked back and forth. Everyone YELPS as they are thrashed about...

... save for Kepler. He is silent, watching one object with the greatest intent.

MINKOWSKI
Hera! Can you get us stable!

HERA
I'm trying, but this is not the same as -

At that moment, something new happens. A kind of... VIBRATION goes through the Hephaestus. It seems to resonate with the metal through the whole ship.

HERA
(huh, that's interesting)
Oh. Oooooh. That's different.
(BEAT)
Well, that's not go -

And that moment, practically everything on the Hephaestus LOSES POWER. LIGHTS GO OUT. SCREEN GO BLACK.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?
(BEAT)
HERA!

But no reply - she's gone too.

About the only damn thing that seems to still be working is the speakers, which are still blaring **Boléro.** The music climbs towards its climax.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel! Console, right behind you! Sit rep!

EIFFEL
Yessir!

He pulls himself up to the computer. TYPES -

EIFFEL
Jesus... I'm seeing massive electrical fluctuations all over... it's like we got hit with an EMP. Autopilot's out, processors are out, engines -

JACOBI
So we're dead in the water?

EIFFEL
Looks like everything except comms and aux power is gone, yeah.

MINKWOSKI
Goddammit...

KEPLER
(faintest smile)
Shoulda had that regulator up and -

EIFFEL
What good would that have done? Do our Dear Listeners up there need **more** of a welcome matt?

Kepler looks at Eiffel like he's the dumbest man in the galaxy.

KEPLER
Oh, you still don't get it, do you? That machine was never about getting anything to come in.

MINKOWSKI
(gets it)
Oh. Oh no. It was about keeping something out...

EIFFEL
(oh shit?)
Out?
(BEAT)
Keeping **what** out?

RUUUUMBLE...

KEPLER
I expect you're about to see for yourself.

Once again, the weird VIBRATION goes through the ship.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Here we go...

Everyone holds their breath, terrified.

The vibrations start small... get LOUDER... and LOUDER... AND LOUDER...

Then they start to PASS... getting SOFTER... and softer... and...

Gone.

Everyone looks at each other. The station CREAKS.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well... that... wasn't **so** - AHH!

What spooks Eiffel is a sound. A horrible sound. It's a sudden, ragged, GASPING BREATH. It's followed by other, GASPING, WHEEZING, STRUGGLING BREATHS and COUGHS.

As if someone was relearning how to breathe.

This continues for quite some time. It's a dreadful process, made only worse by what's happening around it. The body TWISTS and JERKS, with muscles and tendons FIRING OFF unpredictably.

It CONVULSES HORRIBLY, as different body parts reawaken, and joints and bones reassemble themselves. It is the gruesome symphony... of a broken body knitting itself back together.

And it's all coming from Isabel Lovelace's body bag.

But as we said, that all happens slowly and gradually. Lets rejoin the action back at Eiffel's cowardly scream:

EIFFEL
AHH! What the f -

JACOBI
Holy God.

KEPLER
Get back. Step away from it.

MINKOWSKI
What is - what is - ?

EIFFEL
It's - no...

KEPLER
Eiffel, just -

EIFFEL
That was from Captain Lovelace's body bag, right?

KEPLER
Yes, it was.

MINKOWSKI
What the hell is going on?!

KEPLER
Just -

EIFFEL
HOW ARE YOU SO CALM!
(at the bag)
Ca- Captain? Is that you? Can you -

KEPLER
No, it can't hear you. Not yet.
This is going to happen in layers.
Respiratory is coming back first,
it'll need some time for the
nervous system.

Eiffel looks at Kepler, finally beginning to understand the terrible truth.

EIFFEL
It?

KEPLER
It.

But at that moment, the body CONVULSES HORRIBLY, finally TEARING the body bag.

Eiffel, Minkowski, and Jacobi all GASP.

Minkowski is the first to recover -

MINKOWSKI
Oh my God, Eiffel... look at her
head.

EIFFEL
The... the wound. It's...
completely gone.

KEPLER
Yes.

Eiffel turns to him, snapping.

EIFFEL
Don't just stand there going,
"Yes," you cryptic bastard! Enough
with the ooga-booga, just tell us:
what is happening to Captain
Lovelace?

KEPLER
(almost gently)
That's not Captain Lovelace, Eiffel. You have never met Isabel Lovelace. She has been dead for a very, very long time.

EIFFEL
But -

KEPLER
That... is a thing. A thing that is very good at impersonating Captain Lovelace.

Behind them, the horrible breathing and the convulsing seem to settle. Eiffel looks at Kepler... looks at Lovelace... looks at Kepler...

Boléro rises to its climax...

EIFFEL
WHAT?

Kepler lets out a LOW BREATH.

KEPLER
Ooookay. Let's just start at the beginning, shall we? If somebody would be so kind as to remove these handcuffs, I would be more than happy to explain **everything** that has been going on.

And off of that, the music reaches it's final, discordant note -

And then there is SILENCE.

ANNOUNCER
Wolf 359 will return... in 2017.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 46.

WOLF 359

"CHANGE OF MIND"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Story by:

Lillian Holman, Cecilia Lynn-Jacobs, Sarah Shachat
& Gabriel Urbina

WRITER'S NOTE:

The following is the script for a special, one-off episode of **WOLF 359**. The plot is a largely independent story, unconnected to (most of the) events and characters of recent episodes.

However, certain information that has been introduced in previous episodes is taken as understood by the audience in the following script. For the reader's convenience, the following is a quick reference guide:

The story of **WOLF 359** follows the crew of the **U.S.S. Hephaestus Station**, a research station sent into deep space to study the unique properties of a distant star. Over the course of their time there, the characters discover that the mission's corporate sponsor, **Goddard Futuristics**, has some secret, nefarious purposes behind the mission.

In time, they also discover that they are not the first crew that Goddard Futuristics has sent up to the Hephaestus. There was an earlier team there. This Special Episode tells their story.

This earlier crew is comprised by:

Captain Isabel Lovelace - the station's hotheaded commanding officer.

Communications Officer Lambert - her stuffy, by-the-book second-in-command.

Doctor Kuan Hui - a sarcastic, brilliant astrophysicist.

Doctor Victoire Fourier - a younger, up-and-coming astrophysicist, and Hui's subordinate.

Petty Officer Mace Fisher - the station's burly, taciturn engineer.

Doctor Elias Selberg - a reserved, intensely private Soviet biologist. Unknown to the rest of the crew, he's running a series of radiation exposure experiments on Officer Fisher. Also unknown to the rest of the crew: his real name is Dmitri Vologin.

and **Rhea -** an artificial intelligence unit that runs all of the station's automated functions. A non-verbal unit, Rhea communicates through beeps and through text via a series of small consoles mounted on the walls throughout the station.

Not present on the station but also relevant is **Mr. Cutter**, the mission's direct supervisor (and the series's primary villain). Bright, pleasant, and completely machiavellian,

Cutter tends to unnerve any and everyone he meets.

Not introduced in the series yet: **Eris**. Like Rhea, an A.I. unit. Unlike Rhea, a *very* advanced model, and very much verbal.

Everything else should be more or less explained over the course of the script.

- Gabriel Urbina

CAST LIST

LOVELACE ... CECILIA LYNN-JACOBS

LAMBERT ... ZACH VALENTI

FOURIER ... BETH EYRE

HUI ... ARIEL ESTRADA

FISHER ... PETER COLEMAN

SELBERG ... ZACH VALENTI

MR. CUTTER ... SCOTTY SHOEMAKER

ERIS ... MARY KATE WILES

ADDITIONAL VOICES ... ZACH VALENTI

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A set of sounds we rarely hear on Wolf 359: Blades of grass. Wind. Birds. A river. We're earth-bound. Then: a FOOTSTEP on gravel. It belongs to CAPTAIN ISABEL LOVELACE.

LOVELACE
I... I know this place.

Her voice sounds a bit distant, a bit echoey.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
West Point. In the winter. Last of the leaves are falling.

We catch other distant sounds: cadets marching, a whistle...

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I'm here to - No. Wait.

She looks around again, apprehensive. As if suddenly unsure.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
This is wrong. I *was* here. I left.

There's another distant sound, SHRILL and HIGH-PITCHED.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What is happening? I'm not supposed to be here.

Louder...

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I'm supposed to be on -

LOUDER and with a sudden AMBIENT WOOSH! we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - 0800 HOURS

Captain Lovelace's eyes SNAP OPEN. We hear her ALARM CLOCK. She rises, GROANING in protest. Finally -

LOVELACE
Okay, okay... thank you, Rhea. I'm awake. Enough.

The ALARM STOPS.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Good morning to you too... How's everything looking?

There's a BEEP from RHEA, the station's A.I. We also hear the distinct sound of DIGITAL TEXT FILLING A SCREEN.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Fine... fine. Just let me know when anything bursts into flame, okay?
(BEEP, text)
Yes, Rhea, I meant to say <u>if</u> something bursts into flame.

We hear Lovelace getting up: she YAWNS, pulls herself upright. After a moment - KNOCK, KNOCK.

LOVELACE (CONT’D)
Enter.

The DOOR OPENS, and in comes DR. ELIAS SELBERG.

SELBERG
Captain.

LOVELACE
Morning, Doc. How's today looking?

SELBERG
Well within parameters.

LOVELACE
Hmm. Would you like to play a game?

SELBERG
... a game?

LOVELACE
How long is it going to be before something goes *horribly* wrong?

SELBERG
Captain...

LOVELACE
No, c'mon? An hour? Two hours?

SELBERG
No. Nothing is going to -

And then an ALARM starts going off.

SELBERG (CONT'D)
Ah. Well... Could be possible -

LOVELACE
(low)
Christ all mighty do I have to be right *every single time*? Lets go.

She SIGHS, already going out the door. We follow her into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

We stay with Lovelace as she moves through the station.

LOVELACE
How many times did I say it? His trajectory takes us too close.

SELBERG
Trajectory was *fine*. Personally double checked -

LOVELACE
Well, you forgot to carry a zero somewhere. Get down to electrical. We lose power I want to *at least* have aux.

SELBERG
Yes, sir.

A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES as Selberg exits. A moment later another DOOR OPENS -

FOURIER
Oooh, wrong door.

LOVELACE
(nice try)
Good morning, Doctor Fourier.

DOCTOR VICTOIRE FOURIER, the station's junior astrophysicist, reluctantly falls into step with Lovelace.

FOURIER
Morning, Captain.

LOVELACE
Any insight into all the loud sounds and very angry lights?

FOURIER
Just a... *slight* miscalculation w-

LOVELACE
It doesn't sound slight. It sounds *emergency*.

FOURIER
You know how touchy the alarm -

LOVELACE
If we all die because Hui wanted a new angle for *stargazing*...

FOURIER
We're trying to observe an unprecedented stellar phenomenon.

LOVELACE
You know what's a key step in observing? Not. Being. Dead. Are we about to be dead?

FOURIER
No!

In the distance, something RUMBLE OMINOUSLY.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
Well, probably.

LOVELACE
Fourier...

FOURIER
Everything's *fine*, Captain.

LOVELACE
It better be, I'm not in the mood for a lecture. Find Hui. Help him with this.

FOURIER
Will do!

LOVELACE
And don't tell -

FOURIER
Won't do!

Fourier exits through a hatch. Lovelace keeps moving.

LOVELACE
(low, to herself)
Buncha nerds... gonna crash my...
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(loud)
FISHER!

She OPENS A DOOR, pushing into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING SECTION - CONTINUOUS

The engine room. A mess of machinery. Working through it is the ship's engineer, PETTY OFFICER MACE FISHER.

LOVELACE
FISHER!

FISHER
(not looking up)
Heya, Captain. G'morning.

LOVELACE
(pointed)
Is it? Are we going to *explode*?

FISHER
Pfft, explode? What makes you say that?
(re: alarms)
Oh that? That's nothing. Don't you worry your pretty little head about that.

LOVELACE
Oh, I do worry, Fisher. I do worry my pretty, normal-sized head.

FISHER
Ahhh... a bit of duct tape and elbow grease. We'll be fine.

LOVELACE
We better! I took a heck of a risk with this maneuver of Hui's! The last thing I need is to have it blow up in my face and have to hear "I told you so" from -

LAMBERT
CAPTAIN!

Lovelace shuts her eyes: *Ah shit.*

After a BEAT she turns around, finding herself face to face with the prim, proper, and profoundly unhappy figure of COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER SAMUEL LAMBERT. Her second-in-command.

Lovelace INHALES DEEPLY, steadying herself.

LOVELACE
Officer Lambert. Good morning.

LAMBERT
I need to speak with you for a moment.

LOVELACE
Yes, I'm sure you do. Fisher, keep us in orbit.

FISHER
Aye-aye, Cap.

And with that, she leaves, Lambert hot on her heels.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace moves through the station.

LOVELACE
Lambert, you've got from here to the bridge. What can I do for you?

LAMBERT
Captain, I have to -

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
- once again -

LOVELACE
Once again...

LAMBERT
- register my strenuous objection to this trajectory adjustment. It's a clear violation of the stellar aviation safety protocols -

LOVELACE
Mm-hmm...

LAMBERT
- it's in flagrant disregard of all orbiting safety procedures -

LOVELACE
Mm-hmm...

LAMBERT
- **obviously** a massive departure from best practices as outlined in -

LOVELACE
Mm-hmm...

LAMBERT
Could you please stop that?!

LOVELACE
Mm-mmm. What else?

LAMBERT
Sir, Pryce and Carter five eighty-two very clearly states that -

LOVELACE
Isn't that the one about not using toilet paper to patch up the coffeemaker?

LAMBERT
Sir, you have to take this seriously!

LOVELACE
Fine, I'll do that as soon as *you* relax! We've got a full team of professionals. They can handle it.

Around them the STATION SHAKES. It sounds pretty ominous.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
They can handle it <u>or</u> I get to kill Doctor Hui. Either way, it's gonna be a fun morning.

LAMBERT
It isn't just the danger. This is interfering with everyone's regular jobs. Selberg hasn't rotated his samples, you haven't even done your commander's log for this week.

LOVELACE
Oh, for God's... Here, you got one of the recorders on you?

He HOLDS IT UP. She SNATCHES IT, and CLICKS A BUTTON.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
This is the log of Captain Isabel Lovelace, on board the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. It is Day 199, everything is great, Lambert needs to chill, The End.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(CLICKS it off)
There, see? Commander's Log: check.

LAMBERT
That's not what I -

LOVELACE
Oh, hold on a sec. I've got an physicist to put the fear of me into.

She OPENS A DOOR, and we follow them into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The control center for the station. At the helm, holding onto the navigation control column and furiously concentrated on what he's doing, is DOCTOR KUAN HUI. This is Fourier's superior, the station's senior astrophysicist.

Lovelace and Lambert both make a beeline at him. As they do, another JOLT runs through the station, making various objects around them CLATTER.

LOVELACE
Hui: what are you doing with my station?

HUI
Morning, Captain. Just adjusting our sidereal trajectory to compensate for the angle of -

LOVELACE
Plain. English. *Please*.

HUI
I'm just... backing it up a couple... hundred thousand clicks.

LOVELACE
And all the turbulence? The alarms? The ominous rumblings?

HUI
That's just some... gravitational potholes. And stellar wind bumps.

LAMBERT
Doctor Hui, this entire maneuver is in clear violation of safety protocol 7G and -

LOVELACE
Lambert! Not now! Hui, do something.

HUI
Something like... what?

LOVELACE
I don't know, like stopping?

HUI
Ohh, noooo, that's not a good idea. Right now, gravitationally speaking, we're in... I guess you'd call it the... Zone of Terror?

LAMBERT
The <u>what</u>?

LOVELACE
Why are we in the Zone of Terror?!

HUI
Class twelve stellar flare. No one's ever seen one, and we're about to get one in... thirty-six hours, seventeen minutes, and forty-three seconds. But we were going to be on the wrong side of the orbit. We would have missed it.

LOVELACE
So we're all going to die just so you can see some star fireworks?

HUI
We're... *almost* certainly not!

LAMBERT
There are multiple manuals that <u>strictly</u> forbid -

LOVELACE
Lambert! Still not now!

A JOLT runs through the station. The LIGHTS FLICKER.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Is... is it me or is the turbulence getting *stronger*?

HUI
Never fear, Captain. We'll just -

There's a BEEP from his console. He looks at his screen.

HUI (CONT'D)
- huh, that's... okay...

LOVELACE
(pointed)
Hui? Everything all right?

HUI
Hmm? Oh! Yeah, yeah. Everything's fine. But you... may want to hold onto something.

The STATION IS VIOLENTLY ROCKED. And then AGAIN. And AGAIN.

LOVELACE
Hui...

HUI
Yes, Captain. I know, I know.

LAMBERT
Hui...

HUI
Yes, Officer Grumpy Pants.

LAMBERT
Don't call me that!

The SHAKING INTENSIFIES. GLASS CRACKS.

LOVELACE
Hui...

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Hui...

HUI
Just give it a moment.

LOVELACE
ONE.

LAMBERT
ONE.

Finally the STATION SETTLES. The vibration stops completely.

HUI
There. See? Light as a feather.

There's a BEAT as Lovelace and Lambert appreciate how un-crashed they are. Then -

LOVELACE
See Lambert? I <u>told you</u> everything was under control!

LAMBERT
This is still a very egregious violation of safety regulations 74-B, 62-Y, 56-R -

LOVELACE
God, stop it with the -

Hui SIGHS. Behind him, a DOOR OPENS, and Fourier enters.

FOURIER
Kuan. How did it go?

HUI
Oh, fine, fine. We're on a stable -

LOVELACE
No, **YOU'RE** going to listen to me!

FOURIER
Oh. Oh dear. They're at it again?

HUI
Oh yeah.

FOURIER
Well then. Just another happy, sunny day out here, seven and a half light years away from Earth.

And off of that, we go into our -

OPENING CREDITS

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - 2200 HOURS

Lovelace and Lambert arguing. They've been here for a *while*.

LOVELACE
Lambert, that's *completely* ridiculous. This is about you being reasonable, for once.

LAMBERT
No, this is about station safety.

LOVELACE
It's about *you* getting your nose out of the books and -

As Lovelace speaks, the quality of her vocals change. We go from listening to them directly to hearing them through a speaker, and suddenly we are in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

LOVELACE
(over comms)
- seeing if you are capable of even the pale imitation of an original thought!

LAMBERT
(over comms)
You don't think that *maybe* we've evolved past -

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
- what we can do thinking by ourselves -

LOVELACE
Just because <u>you've</u> evolved into an asinine teacher's pet -

And on it goes. We hear an appreciative whistle: *damn*.

HUI
Boy, they're really going at it...

Hui's perched above a console, listening to the carnage taking place in the other room.

FOURIER
Not supposed to eavesdrop, Kuan.

She's in the back of the room, heroically attempting to be absorbed in a book.

HUI
Oh, I'm sorry, Victoire. Are you joining us today?

FOURIER
No, I'm not.

HUI
I *thought* that you were reading.

FOURIER
I <u>am</u> reading, shut up.

HUI
That's funny, because I remember you saying something about not wanting anything to do with my lurid little -

She FLIPS the PAGES of the book, SNAPS it SHUT.

FOURIER
Oh honestly, how could anyone focus right now? Between those two performing their impression of attack Rottweilers and this *bunk* you're making me read, I'm surprised I haven't lost my mind.

HUI
Lovecraft isn't bunk.

FOURIER
Fine: meet you in the middle, lets call it "drivel."

HUI
It's a classic. Just because you're too genteel to appreciate the -

In a flash, she's opened the book.

FOURIER
(the most mocking voice she can muster)
"What they saw were organic shapes, pinkish things with crustaceous bodies bearing vast pairs of dorsal fins, membraneous wings, and a sort of convoluted ellipsoid -"
(normal voice)
"Convoluted ellipsoid," Kuan?

HUI
Just because the vocabulary is a bit more *polished* than what you -

OVER THE COMMS: CRASH! Hui and Fourier's attention snaps to the console. BEAT. Then -

OVER THE COMMS: the ARGUMENT RESUMES. Hui SIGHS.

HUI (CONT'D)
Well, if you don't like it, you don't have to read it.

He snatches up the book.

FOURIER
No, wait, give it here.
(BEAT, lower:)
I've read every book I brought up here four times. I'm sick of them.

He smiles, releases the book.

HUI
Could be worse. At least it's not that Wodehouse book you lent me.

FOURIER
You *loved* the Wodehouse.

BEAT.

HUI
All right, fine. I kinda loved the Wodehouse.

FOURIER
Good boy. Now be quiet, I'm trying to listen.

For a BEAT they just take in the argument. Then, without taking their eyes off the console:

HUI
They're really going at it.

FOURIER
Ehh, same old, same old. He threatens her with official sanctions that'll get her discharged, she threatens him with physical violence that'll make his bones break, blah, blah, blah...

HUI
No, *really*. I think they might kill each other this time...

FOURIER
Hmm... Ten dollars on Captain Lovelace.

HUI
Noooo.

FOURIER
Five dollars.

HUI
No!

FOURIER
Oh, come on! Where's your competitive spirit, you reptile?

HUI
I don't think that -

But at that moment, there's a GRUFF GROWL. There's a CLICK and the FEED CUTS OFF.

SELBERG
I am still waiting for radiographic readings. Get back to work.

HUI
Yes, sir.

FOURIER
Yes, sir.

As they leave, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

LOVELACE
I don't know how else I can explain this to you, *Officer*.

LAMBERT
Well, *Captain*, maybe if you stopped explaining and <u>listened</u> to -

LOVELACE
I <u>have</u> listened! The first twenty-two times you read me the stupid manual on -

LAMBERT
The people who wrote it are smarter than us, have more experience on -

LOVELACE
You just want things to be the way you want them to be!

LAMBERT
This is **not about what I want!**

That got heated. A BEAT as they stare daggers at each other.

FISHER
Ooooookay then...

Fisher CLEARS HIS THROAT. It's suddenly clear that he's been present this entire time.

FISHER (CONT'D)
That was certainly... *productive*. But if we could return to the official personnel review portion of the evening? Maybe come back to my original question?

LOVELACE
Uhhh, yes.

LAMBERT
Sure.

LOVELACE
What was the question?

FISHER
"And how are we doing today?"

BEAT for Lovelace and Lambert's vast embarrassment.

LOVELACE
I think... fine. Yes.

LAMBERT
Absolutely, yes, very...

LOVLEACE
Fine.

LAMBERT
Yes. That.

BEAT.

FISHER
Of course. Because when one goes into an apoplectic fugue state and spends - oh dear God in Heaven - fifty-four minutes yelling at another person, deaf to all else around them, the word to describe the situation is... *fine*.

BEAT.

LAMBERT
I'm sorry, Officer Fisher.

LOVELACE
Yeah, it... won't happen again.

BEAT. Then Fisher EXHALES, tired.

FISHER
Sure, whatever. Let's... call it a night on this one, all right?

LOVELACE
Sure. Lambert, we're done. Get.

BEAT. Lambert's not leaving.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Lambert?

LAMBERT
This is an official personnel review meeting, sir. I am not authorized to leave until my Commanding Officer dismisses me.

LOVELACE
You're an annoying buzzkill with a weird nose.

FISHER
Captain...

LOVELACE
Oh, all right.
(with exaggerated pomp)
Communications Officer Lambert, you are hereby dismissed from this official meeting and formally invited to return to your duties.

LAMBERT
... <u>thank you</u>... Captain.

And with that Lambert exits, SLAMMING the DOOR behind him.

LOVELACE
Troglodyte...
(sees Fisher)
What? C'mon. What's with the face?

FISHER
You want some advice, Captain?

LOVELACE
No.

FISHER
Kinda makes me want to give it to you even more...

Lovelace EXHALES, crosses her arms... but she nods: *well*?

FISHER (CONT'D)
I think that you should give Lambert a chance.

LOVELACE
What. I'm not -

FISHER
Ah-ah, no. I put up with an hour of you two going at each other like you were getting paid for it. Now it's my turn.

LOVELACE
But -

FISHER
Zip it, sir.
(BEAT)
He's a smart guy. Wouldn't be up here if he wasn't. And there's some good stuff in those manuals, or they wouldn't be up here either. And... I think the two of you have more in common than you realize.
(off her reaction)
Yeah, that's right, I said it. Lambert was the only one that agreed with you this morning. And guess what: you *were* right! Hui's maneuver was dangerous! And yet... after you agreed... and were right... the two of you still had a fight *with each other*. Seems to me, when that sort of thing happens, it's not so much about what's happening out here...
(he taps Lovelace's head)
... it's about what's going on in here, Captain.

Lovelace takes a DEEP BREATH. There's a BEEP.

FISHER (CONT'D)
And with that, I've got a date with a coil compressor. G'night!

He CLOSES the DOOR behind him, leaving Lovelace alone.

LOVELACE
Yeah... good night.

Lovelace takes a DEEP BREATH. After a LONG BEAT -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Rhea? Could you connect me with Doctor Hui, please?

There's a BEEP from the console, followed by a BUZZER.

HUI
(over comms)
Yeeeees?

LOVELACE
Hui... do you have any time tonight?

HUI
For you, Captain? Always.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK - 2300 HOURS

Lovelace, now wearing a space suit, goes through the inner door of the airlock. It snaps shut behind her with a HISS.

LOVELACE
Hui, you reading me?

HUI
(over comms)
Five by five, Captain. You should be all set: tether's secure, and you've got forty minutes of oxygen in the tank.

LOVELACE
Thanks, Kuan.

Lovelace reaches out and TURNS A LEVER.

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HULL - CONTINUOUS

The airlock outer door OPENS with a BLAST OF AIR. Lovelace emerges from it. She plants her feet on the hull with the suit's magnetic boots: *THWOOMP... THWOOMP...*

HUI
How's the weather out there?

LOVELACE
Quiet. I'm going to turn off the mag boots, do a bit of floating.

HUI
Enjoy. I'm right here if you need anything, just let me know.

She hits a SWITCH, and with a BEEP her magnetic boots turn off. Weightless, she floats upwards. There is a moment of ABSOLUTE, GLORIOUS SILENCE as she leaves the station behind.

Then she HITS ANOTHER BUTTON. Through her suit's internal speakers, a SONG BEGINS TO PLAY. She turns her gaze upwards.

Tiny, alone, she floats.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - GALLEY - 0800 HOURS

The next morning. Breakfast. Everyone is gathered around a table, chatting as they polish off the last bits.

LOVELACE
All right, folks, settle down. First things first: in spite of some of our more hare-brained ideas, we've somehow made it to our two-hundredth day.

There's GENERAL APPLAUSE from the table.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
We'll be doing some celebrating tonight once we're all off duty. Doctor Hui has even arranged a... what was it again?

HUI
A never-before-observed class twelve stellar flare.

LOVELACE
A *that*. So if you want to boldly watch what no man has watched before, that's in the observatory deck at 2100 hours. Thank you, astro department.

There's some good-natured CHUCKLES from Hui and Fourier.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
But... before we get to that... as Officer Lambert has *so* kindly reminded me... there's a message for all of us from Command.

There's GENERAL GROANS from Hui, Fourier, and Fisher.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Yeah. Lets just get this over with. Rhea? Roll the tape.

There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC from the speakers. Then -

MR. CUTTER
(over comms)
Hello campers!

This is MR. CUTTER, the mission's corporate liaison.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter here. Just wanted to send you all a quick message for your two-hundredth! Now that the introductory phase of the mission is over, I'm sure you're all ready to dig into some work of *real* substance. Remember Pryce and Carter 982: Good things come to those who wait, but *great* things come to those who waste no time in getting back to work. But ahh, you don't need me to tell you that, you rock stars. Super proud, miss you, can't wait to see you, keep up the great work!

And with another BURST OF STATIC, the message closes.

FISHER
Is it me, or does he get creepier every time we hear from him?

LOVELACE
It's not just you. All right: you heard the suit, let's look alive. Jobs. Hui, now that you've *almost* crashed my station, any prep we need for this stellar thing?

HUI
I gotta calibrate some of the instruments, but other than that we should be good to go.

LOVELACE
Good. Selberg? Greenhouse maintenance?

SELBERG
Yes, Captain. And physical examination on Officer Fisher.

FISHER
Yes, yes.

SELBERG
Overdue by a factor of -

FISHER
I'll come by your lab once my first shift is up, all right?

LOVELACE
Fisher, how are the engines? Did they take much of a beating from Mr. Hui's Wild Ride?

FISHER
Ohh, there's a couple of dings... Cracked plaster here and... Yeah, there's some work to do.

LOVELACE
Should I be worried?

FISHER
I wouldn't go that far, but I wouldn't say no to another pair of hands either.

LOVELACE
Lambert, you're with Fisher, do whatever he says.

LAMBERT
I'm sorry, Captain. I can't.

LOVELACE
That's very funny. Go with Fisher and see if you -

LAMBERT
Captain, I'm serious. I can't.

For the first time, Lovelace looks up at Lambert.

LOVELACE
Why not?

LAMBERT
Because I'm busy.

LOVELACE
With what?

LAMBERT
With my *duties* as the station's communications officer.

LOVELACE
Lambert, I'm sure we'll all manage to struggle through a day without being reminded of every little in and out of Pryce and Carter.

LAMBERT
That's not what I mean! I'm talking about my actual duties! Like the D.S.A.L.S.!

FOURIER
I'm sorry, the what?

LAMBERT
The Deep Space Alien Life Survey.

BEAT. Then - Lovelace, Fisher, Hui, and, in spite of herself, Fourier, all ERRUPT INTO LAUGHTER.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
What? <u>What</u>?

LOVELACE
Oh... oh my God, Lambert...

LAMBERT
What is wrong with all of you?

FISHER
Mate, don't tell me you <u>actually</u> do that "search for alien life" crap.

LAMBERT
Of course I do! I spend seven hours every day scanning deep space radio frequencies for -

HUI
Well, that explains what he does with himself all day.

Hui and Fisher CRACK UP again.

LOVELACE
All right, that's enough. Lambert, are you gonna help Fisher or not?

LAMBERT
I am not! I am a member of this crew. I perform important and difficult tasks, and I perform them *diligently*. The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence *is* one of this mission's objectives. And you, Captain, should be doing everything in your power to help me carry out that job.
(under his breath)
Instead of making it *more* difficult, like you always do.

LOVELACE
What was that?

LAMBERT
Nothing.

LOVELACE
No, no. Come on. You got something to say? Let's have it out.

There's a very LONG BEAT where they stare at each other.

FOURIER
... Captain? I... I'm a bit ahead. I could take some time off today, help Fisher with the engines.

LOVELACE
You don't have to do that, Fourier.

FOURIER
Oh, it's... it's really no problem.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Fine. Fourier, you help Fisher, Lambert you can do... whatever it is that you do. Happy endings.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Well? You've all got jobs, don't you? Let's go! Get to it!

EVERYONE SCRAMBLES, shutting doors as they leave. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1000 HOURS

Lambert by himself. He fiddles with a dial.

LAMBERT
Lambda Sigma Sector, Bearing Fourteen...

He CLICKS ON the RADIO. There's a SQUEAL OF FEEDBACK and a BURST OF STATIC. After a BEAT, he SHUTS IT OFF.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
No contact. Lambda Sigma Sector, Bearing Fifteen...

There's a BEEP from Rhea. Some text pops up on the screen.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Yes, Rhea, I'm fine.
(BEEP, text)
No, I... well, thank you for saying so. I think you do a great job too.
(BEEP, text)
No, it's not that. This is a very sensitive mission. Captain Lovelace is very... *charismatic*, but I don't always know that -

He's interrupted by a MACHINE. Not one we've heard so far - it kinda sounds like an old-school stock ticker.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
What the - ? Is that the Pulse Beacon Relay?
(BEEP, text)
Looks like we have an incoming message from Command.
(BEEP, text)
No, I just need a moment to decode it, and then - huh. That's an A.P.O. encoding. It's not a general crew message it's...

There's a CHIME from the machine. A PRINTER starts up.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
It's marked for my eyes only.
(BEEP, text)
No, I don't know what it's about.

The printer finishes. We hear Lambert TEAR the paper.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Let's see... "Dear Communications Officer Lambert, thank you for your dutiful service and your many detailed reports. We are writing in regards to your multiple formal complaints about the behavior of your commanding officer." Hah! See, Rhea? *I told you* someone read those. "These infractions have been noted in her record, and will be processed upon her return to Earth. In the meantime, however, there is a contingency placed on board your space station designed to address these sorts of crises in the command hierarchy. Please adhere to the following instructions *exactly* as written.

"Step one: please proceed to Storage Room A2 and locate... Box 953." "

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - GREENHOUSE - 1100 HOURS

A lush, cramped, earthy space. Bits of machinery HUM softly. At one of the consoles is Doctor Selberg, trying to do work. Behind him is Captain Lovelace, *not* trying to do work.

LOVELACE
I mean, you spend a fortune sending A-Team scientists to deep space and you put <u>that</u> guy as second-in-command? What was Cutter smoking?

SELBERG
Officer Lambert is skilled technician, no?

LOVELACE
If you call turning a radio on and off a skill. But he's such a tool!

SELBERG
Right...

LOVELACE
And I don't mean that in the colloquial sense, I mean literally. He has no mind of his own, he just does whatever Command programs him to do.

SELBERG
Quite. Yes.

LOVELACE
(horrible Lambert impression)
"Oh, it's breakfast time. Better check the manuals to see if I'm allowed to have any pancakes!"

SELBERG
And this is problem?

LOVELACE
Yes! Of course is problem! I need someone who has a mind of their own!
(off Selberg's look)
What?

SELBERG
You want someone with mind of own, yes? That is ideal for second-in-command?

LOVELACE
Yeah.

SELBERG
You are perhaps needing someone who... questions superior officer? Who does not immediately do what is told? Who will fight for what they think is right way of doing job?

LOVELACE
Oh, shut up and get back to work.

SELBERG
With pleasure.

Selberg turns to the console, Lovelace head out, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - 1200 HOURS

Fisher and Fourier together in the engineering section.

FISHER
All right, you're doing great. Just hold that in place for a second...

FOURIER
Okay...

WHIRR! Fisher uses a high-powered screwdriver to set whatever Fourier is holding into place. It continues over:

FOURIER (CONT'D)
You... you know, Fisher...

FISHER
Mmm?

FOURIER
Captain... Captain Lovelace...

FISHER
Mm-hmm?

FOURIER
Well, she's... I mean, she's **great.**

FISHER
Mm-hmm?

FOURIER
Just terrific. But there are moments here and there when she can -

FISHER
You're scared of her.

FOURIER
Yeah, a little bit.

FISHER
Well, she's a pretty scary lady.

FOURIER
No, it's not - well, she *is*, but -

FISHER
You gotta hold still.

FOURIER
Sorry. I just... wonder if she'd... be *bored* without something to fight against. And I get the sense that if Lambert wasn't around...

FISHER
She'd be picking on you.

FOURIER
There but for the grace of Goddard, yeah. What do you think?

Fisher thinks for a BEAT. Finally -

FISHER
I think you worry too much, young one. And I think you're gonna be fine. But I also think it's a good day to not be Sam Lambert, eh?

FOURIER
Yeah.

FISHER
Right. Come on, next ones.

And as they move onto the next item on their list, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - STOREROOM - 1300 HOURS

LAMBERT
You're <u>sure</u> it said Store room A2?

There's a BEEP from Rhea, and text on one of the screens.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Okay, I'll try that.
(lower, to himself)
Of course Command would think about these sorts of things. *Of course* they'd have a -

He suddenly stops cold. He's spotted it: **Box 953.**

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Rhea? Is it? The... really big one?
(BEEP)
(MORE)

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
With the label that says...
"Danger: sensitive contents?"
(BEEP)
Ooookay. Let's get everyone else.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CARGO BAY - 1400 HOURS

Box 953 now lies in the middle of the cargo bay. Around it stands everyone in the crew. Fisher, Fourier, and Hui inspect the box. Selberg and Lambert go over some papers. Lovelace stands in the back, profoundly unimpressed.

LOVELACE
It's a big box. How did we ever get by without a big friggin' box in the middle of my cargo bay?

LAMBERT
Very funny, Captain.

LOVELACE
Lambert, why are you making us waste our time with this thing?

SELBERG
(re: papers)
Actually, Captain, it looks like going through contents of box is priority one item.

FISHER
Officer Sam's got himself a Command communique. Looks like it came from the top of the food chain.

LOVELACE
And we're just supposed to drop everything?

LAMBERT
Yes.

FISHER
Powers that Be say, "Jump..."

LOVELACE
Ugh... Hui, what can you tell me about this thing?

HUI
Well, Captain, I'm still in the early stages my survey, but I think it's safe to say...
(knocks on the box)
Yep, it's definitely made out of some kind of metal.

LOVELACE
Hui...

FOURIER
(ear pressed to the box)
There's also some kind of sound coming from inside of it.

LOVELACE
How delightfully informative. How about <u>opening</u> the damn thing?

HUI
Uh, yeah, that's not gonna happen.

FISHER
See those three deadbolts? That's industrial grade titanium.

LOVELACE
Uh-huh. And could someone explain to me why this isn't just a huge waste of t -

SELBERG
Captain? A moment, please.

He gestures towards the back of the cargo bay. Lovelace SIGHS, but follows him. Once they get there:

LOVELACE
(hissed whisper)
What?

SELBERG
(low)
Captain, have you considered possibility that simply... letting matters proceed to conclusion may be more efficient than the arguing with Officer Lambert?

LOVELACE
Why would I - ?

SELBERG
And besides - are you not supposed to be in looking for common ground?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Fisher's been talking to you, too?

SELBERG
Little bit, yes.

LOVELACE
Is *everyone* in on this?

SELBERG
Little bit, yes.

LOVELACE
Ughhh, *fine*.

With a SIGH, she turns back to the others. Selberg follows.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Nerds: give me some good news.

FOURIER
Actually, I think I have something. Looks like the thing's coded to open for Officer Lambert, and the entire system is just voice locked.

LOVELACE
So what? We just need to say, "Please access the contents of Box 953?"

LAMBERT
No, I would have to say, "Please access the contents of Box 953," for it to -

COMPUTER
Voice recognition: Samuel Lambert.

There's a SHARP BURST OF AIR and a few PNEUMATIC HISSES as the box opens. As this is ye olde radio, we can't see it, but we hear the hum of a MACHINE and the churn of GEARS.

LOVELACE
All right... I'll take weird-ass contraptions for a thousand. Hui?

HUI
Weird-ass contraptions sounds about right to me. Doctor S.?

SELBERG
Not... sure...

LOVELACE
Lambert, what are we supposed to do with this thing?

LAMBERT
(going through papers)
Uhh... right. There are supposed to be six openings on the front of the machine.

FISHER
That'll be those right there.

LAMBERT
We're each supposed to place our hands into one of those openings.

LOVELACE
And then?

LAMBERT
Umm, that's a good question.
(off her look)
That's the end of the directions! We're just supposed to put our hands in and wait for further instructions.

Lovelace SIGHS, but -

LOVELACE
All right, everyone, you heard the clipboard. Pick an opening.

Everyone places their hands inside. After a moment -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Now what? Do we shake them all about? How *exactly* are we supposed to receive further instruct-

At that moment we hear the sound of a new part of the machine COMING TO LIFE, and MOVING, DOWNWARDS, SHARPLY, and then, *horribly* - the SOUND OF METAL PIERCING FLESH -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
AHH!

Then - ALL THE SOUND CUTS OUT. All we can hear is Lovelace's breathing. She looks around, realizing that she's no longer on the Hephaestus. Suddenly, she's in -

INT./EXT. - MENTAL WHITE SPACE - N/A

A completely white void. No features, no items, no people.

LOVELACE
What the... ? Where am - ? Hello? Hello?

MR. CUTTER
Hello, Isabel.

Lovelace spins around - and almost has a heart attack.

Standing behind her, spiffy as ever in a freshly-pressed suit, and wearing his best Cheshire Cat grin, is MR. CUTTER.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
It's good to see you.

LOVELACE
Mis - mister Cutter? You're here?

MR. CUTTER
Well... here-ish. Welcome to the waiting room!

LOVELACE
What is - ?

MR. CUTTER
Mental blank space. Think of it as a loading screen. A place for us to talk before the action begins.

LOVELACE
Act - action? What is happening?

MR. CUTTER
How's your hand feeling?

LOVELACE
What?

MR. CUTTER
You feel a very slight discomfort in the back of your hand - just a tiny pinch - don't you?

LOVELACE
... yeah.

MR. CUTTER
That's where we've hooked you in. Very sophisticated system - just needs an entry point into your nervous system and -
(clicks his tongue)
Lets us project right into your head.

LOVELACE
So all of this is inside my head? None of it is real?

MR. CUTTER
"Of course it is happening inside your head, but why on Earth should that mean it's not real?" Oooh, I always wanted to say that one!
(BEAT)
This isn't really me either. It's just an... imprint of my personality. Here to act as a guide.

LOVELACE
A guide for *what*?

MR. CUTTER
Just a second - let me network in everyone else.

He SNAPS HIS FINGERS, and instantaneously the other five members of the crew are standing next to Lovelace.

There's a small, overlapping barrage of people's names and, "Are you all right?"s from the crew as they spot each other.

FOURIER
Captain, what is this?

LOVELACE
I don't know. Care to explain, *Lambert*?

LAMBERT
I, uh... further instructions?

SELBERG
Hyperconductive neural pathway feed link. Very... impressive.

HUI
Yeah, this is some next gen of the next gen tech going on here. Why would they stick it on -

MR. CUTTER
All right, folks, settle down. Now, we are here because we've gotten some slightly alarming reports from your station. Couple of our mission items aren't being taken care of *quite* as well as we'd like. Now, we're not here to play the blame game, these things happen, and - and you guys? I mean, you're *killing it* up there. But it is important to catch the little things before they grow into bigger things. Which is why, today, we're going to go through - drum roll please - a **TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE!**

We can but imagine the DEATH GLARE Lovelace gives Lambert.

LAMBERT
I - I - this is <u>not</u> my fault!

LOVELACE
*This **<u>is</u>** your fault.*

MR. CUTTER
For today's training, we're doing a simulation exercise. We want to make sure you're up to spec with some of the more... extreme situations you might encounter. Which means... field trip!

He CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER, and they find themselves in -

INT. U.S.S. VALKYRIE - HANGAR BAY - N/A

The hangar bay of an old, decrepit space ship. It looks like a derelict: broken, dirty, and badly in need of repairs. The crew members all take in the sudden new surroundings.

FOURIER
Are - are we back?

FISHER
Nah... this isn't the Hephaestus.

MR. CUTTER
Well-spotted, Mace. Welcome to the U.S.S. Valkyrie! This is one of our tragedy cases - it went missing back in the early 2000's. We're standing in our best artist's recreation of the ship.

HUI
And... what exactly are we supposed to do here? Um, sir?

MR. CUTTER
Your mission, should you choose to accept it, and I strongly recommend you *do*, is to solve the mystery of what happened to the crew.

FOURIER
That's it?

MR. CUTTER
Well... there's gonna be a few... *surprises* thrown in the middle. Just to keep you sharp.

FOURIER
(low, to herself)
Oh, why do I open my mouth...?

MR. CUTTER
Find the box, solve the mystery, do it before the time limit runs out.

FISHER
How long is that?

MR. CUTTER
We've found that withholding the precise time limit applies the pressure more effectively.

LOVELACE:
Lovely. Sir, no disrespect, but is this really necessary? We have -

MR. CUTTER
Yes, it is.

He's suddenly dark and forceful.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Until I have given the all clear, this is mission priority item zero: it takes precedence over any and all other functions. You will run the test, as many times as necessary, until I am fully satisfied with your performance. Are we clear?

Whoa. Lovelace stares at him for a BEAT. Finally -

LOVELACE
Ugh, *fine*. Lets just do this thing.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, what an excellent choice, Captain. All right, then! Clock is running, have fun!

And... he's gone. Everyone breathes a bit easier.

FOURIER
Definitely creepier.

LOVELACE
All right, let's figure this out. Any thoughts?

FISHER
Here, hang on.

He's pressing buttons on a panel mounted on the wall. There's a BEEP and the sound of an old system BOOTING UP.

FISHER (CONT'D)
Still a bit of aux power.

FOURIER
What have you got there, Fisher?

FISHER
Basic ship-wide schematics.
(pointing them out)
Here we are... That door over there leads to the bridge. That one over there goes to the crew quarters, and *that* one goes to the lab.

LOVELACE
Nice. Fisher, you and Lambert check out the bridge. Hui and Fourier, crew and Captain's quarters.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Selberg, the two of us'll tackle the lab. Rendezvous back here in twenty minutes. Move fast, and keep an eye out for any clues - lets see if we can figure this out before we run into any of Mr. Cutter's "surprises."

Aaaaaaand... break! DOORS OPEN and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. VALKYRIE - COMMS ROOM - 5 MINUTES LATER

CLICK. A flashlight turns on as Fisher and Lambert enter and scan the room. It's apparent they've also entered something of a war zone: the walls are bullet-ridden, and chunks of metal floating ominously around them.

Fisher WHISTLES appreciatively.

FISHER
Well... looks like these fellas had themselves quite the bar fight.

LAMBERT
Fisher, we don't know what happened here.

FISHER
Riiight... I'm sure there's a very *reasonable* explanation for how all those bullets got lodged in the walls. Maybe all the floating shrapnel is just an interior decorating choice? No judgment.
(turns around)
Oh, look! That's a pretty diesel little barricade around the door. Either talent show night went really wrong, or -

LAMBERT
Or there was some sort of incident. Yes, *fine*.

FISHER
Thank you. Reckon any of the consoles still work?

LAMBERT
I'll check it out.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Have you ever heard of anything like this?

FISHER
What mutinies? Hmm, not exactly common, but it *does* happen. My boyfriend found a couple of stories, back when I first got assigned to the Hephaestus. Wasn't happy.

LAMBERT
And what... causes them?

FISHER
Ah, usually some poor bloke doesn't handle the big black way as well as you'd like. Starts hacking into the rest of the crew's brains with your standard-issue melon baller.
(off of Lambert's look)
Look, mate, don't ask if you don't want to know!

Lambert SIGHS, tinkers with the console.

LAMBERT
We don't know this was caused by the crew. There could have been an external factor.

FISHER
An external factor with AK-47s?

LAMBERT
Just... Don't jump to conclusions. The Command vetting process is very thorough, I'm sure they -

But at that moment, the comms console CRACKLES to life. It unlocks a message almost entirely garbled by STATIC.

VOICE
This - geant Findley - Our demands were - You have no - We control all key - The only path is surren -

FISHER
Ready to jump yet?

LAMBERT
Oh, be quiet. Let me try to clean this up.

We hear Lambert TUNE the CONSOLE. The message gets CLEANER.

VOICE
- not wish to harm anyone. Vermeer, Dyson: if you surrender the explosives and put down your - nobody else needs to die for Lorre's damn plan, I prom -

But CRSSSSH, the message dissolves into STATIC again.

FISHER
Well, what a nice, obliging fellow.
(BEAT)
You okay, Lambert?

LAMBERT
Yeah. Yeah, I guess I'm just... Let's keep going so we can get out of here.

As the two move off, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. VALKYRIE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - 5 MINUTES LATER

Fourier and Hui searching the room. A METAL DRAWER OPENS.

FOURIER
Kuan, look at this. I think these are the Captain's personal effects. There's Command epaulets, a ring... and a pocket watch. Looks like real gold, too.

HUI
Does it still run?

CLICK. Fourier OPENS it.

FOURIER
No, but there's an inscription. "From A to E. All my love." But... the inscription on the door, didn't it say Captain *J.* Lorre? Who's A and E?

HUI
(shrugging)
Maybe it's a family heirloom?

Another DRAWER OPENS.

HUI (CONT'D)
Aha! Pay dirt. Here we go.

We hear a BOOK OPENING and PAGES TURNING.

FOURIER
What have you got?

Hui FLIPS to the cover.

HUI
Diary of Lieutenant Andrew Vermeer.
(clears throat)
"It's started. Findley's taken the -
"

FOURIER
Could... could you not? That belongs to a dead man.

Hui looks at her: are you *serious*?

HUI
You don't want me to read the... simulated recreation of what *might* be a dead person's diary? Is it disrespectful to the pixels?

FOURIER
Oh, okay, fine. What does it say?

HUI
"Findley's taken the bridge, and the tech wing. We have no way to get a message out. Captain Lorre put me charge of all our remaining explosives, but I'm worried about our rations."
(flips page)
"Emily was shot today. Before she died, she told me. I guess she felt she needed to, but I wish to hell she hadn't."
(flips page)
"They cut the power. It can only mean one thing. They're coming. They're coming now."
(BEAT)
Bit of a downer ending, huh?

FOURIER
Kuan. Don't.

BEAT.

HUI
Yeah. Sorry. Lets keep going.

As they move off, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. VALKYRIE - MEDICAL FACILITY - 5 MINUTES LATER

A FLASHLIGHT CLICKS ON, and Lovelace and Selberg peer into:

LOVELACE
Hospital beds, big-ass tech station... Survey says: medical facility.

They move into the space. As they do -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Actually... that's a lot of... very large glass jars. Are those... standard spec?

SELBERG
No, Captain. This room has been turned into a make-shift laboratory. After mission start.

LOVELACE
Someone would do that?

SELBERG
Yes. If they found something that required immediate... *examination*.

LOVELACE
(spotting something)
Whoa. Soot... burn marks...

SELBERG
There was an explosion here.

Lovelace traces the edges with her flashlight, arriving at -

LOVELACE
And the perfect, human-shaped outline in the burn marks?

SELBERG
That would be "explosion victim."

Selberg arrives at a computer and gets it to BOOT UP.

SELBERG (CONT'D)
Console still has power. Accessing local memory...

LOVELACE
I'll take a look over there.

As Lovelace approaches the large glass vials, Selberg leans into the text that's filling the screen.

SELBERG
"Research log of Doctor Kathryn Dyson. Biological samples recovered by Sergeant Findley's team have miraculously moved from initial signs of necrosis to renewed cellular activity."

LOVELACE
"Recovered?" Recovered from where?

SELBERG
Excellent question.

LOVELACE
I swear, if it turns out that Lambert's right about this stuff...

SELBERG
"Samples have developed extensive musculature, despite not having any visible nervous system. Absolutely remarkable regenerative capabilities."

Over the preceding, we began to hear something, almost like a small voice, whisking over the top of the room.

LOVELACE
Did you... ?

SELBERG
(looking up)
What?

BEAT: the SILENCE is DEFEANING.

LOVELACE
Nothing. Never mind.

They both return to their respective tasks.

SELBERG
"Disaster. Captain Lorre has decided to terminate the recovered samples. He believes them to be a liability. But he is a fool. The contents of those five glass tanks must not -"

LOVELACE
Doctor. Tell me you just read that wrong.

SELBERG
What?

LOVELACE
There's *four* glass tanks... and the remains of one *broken* tank.

Selberg's eyes fall on the remains of the tank. Shattered glass floats through the space. It's an awful moment.

SELBERG
That is... unfortunate.

LOVELACE
(low whisper)
Goddammit...

SELBERG
(examining the remains)
Claw marks on interior of the glass... and angle of shatter suggests force came from *inside* the -

LOVELACE
You're not helping!

SELBERG
What would you like me to do?

But at that moment - BOOM! It's a low, dull sound, coming from outside the room. Selberg and Lovelace both FREEZE.

LOVELACE
Selberg, if one of those things got out of a tank, how big could they get?

SELBERG
Big.

LOVELACE
How big?

BOOM! Louder.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Is that getting *closer*?

BOOM! Louder. Closer. And then BOOM! The loudest one yet!

And a moment later, we hear METAL GIVE as another DOOR to the lab is BUSTED OFF ITS HINGES. It FLIES INTO THE LAB, leaving Lovelace and Selberg face-to-face with -

FISHER
There, see? *Told you* I could get it unstuck. Oh - hey Captain!

LOVELACE
Fi - what are you doing here?

LAMBERT
The bridge is sealed off. We thought we'd do our own sweep of downstairs.
(off their faces)
Uhh, are you two okay?

LOVELACE
Ye - it'd take too long to explain.

SELBERG
We may be in the middle of a hostile alien contact simulation.

FISHER
What?

LOVELACE
Well, not if you put it like that... Look, never mind. Did you two find anything useful?

LAMBERT
Um, some half-garbled recordings from one of the -

But at that moment, there's a strange sound: BZZAAAP! Almost like the sound of a TV signal cutting out. Everyone looks around, confused.

LOVELACE
Did... did everything just kinda jump around for a second?

And then again: BZZZAP! And even louder: **BZZZZZAAAAAAAP** and suddenly we're back in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 1430 HOURS

Everyone's EYES SNAP OPEN as the ambient sound of the Hephaestus comes RUSHING INTO the soundscape. They're back. They all look around, profoundly confused.

LOVELACE
Wait, what? Are we - ?

LAMBERT
Back... on... the Hephaestus. Yes.

FISHER
But we - I mean, Fourier, did you - ?

FOURIER
We were going back to the main bay when everything kind of...

LOVELACE
Shorted out? Yeah, same.
(BEAT)
Was that seriously it? Because that was very... anticlimactic.

There's a BEEP from Rhea, and text filling up a screen.

HUI
No, here we go. Rhea got us out.

FOURIER
Rhea?

HUI
Yeah... Looks like it took her a while, but she was able to remotely interface with that machine and got it to terminate the simulation program! Lookit you go, little one! Ten points to Ravenclaw.

LAMBERT
But... we haven't finished the -

LOVELACE
Yeah, we're *done* with this thing, that's an order.

FOURIER
Thank you.

HUI
Oh come on... you're not kinda curious about what happened?

FOURIER
I'm really, really not.

FISHER
A shame not to know, though.
(remembering)
And oh, yeah, Captain what did you find that -

LOVELACE
Doesn't matter. On a multitude of levels.

Behind her, Selberg opens his mouth, then shuts it. Exhales.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(**ahem**)
All right, everyone... that's enough wasted time. Thank you, Rhea, for getting us out of that pointless nightmare.

There's a BEEP from Rhea.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
We'll have plenty of chances to discuss whatever that was *after* our work shifts. But right now? You've all got jobs you were doing before this little interruption. Go get them done.

EVERYONE
Yes, sir. / Aye-aye. / Etc.

Dismissed, everyone begins to head for a door out of -

LOVELACE
Lambert. Stay.

Well then. Lambert stops moving, while pretty much everyone else makes an extra effort to get out of the room ASAP.

BEAT.

LAMBERT
Get it over with. Yell at me and get it over with. Sir.

Lovelace holds his gaze, evenly. A BEAT passes.

LOVELACE
I can't do this anymore.

LAMBERT
What?

LOVELACE
I can't keep fighting like this. I want to get off the merry-go-round.

LAMBERT
(so suspicious)
Oh... kay...

LOVELACE
Look, I have no idea what the hell today was, but as far as Command weirdness goes? I have a bad feeling we're not at rock bottom yet. And when we get there, I don't want to crash into it. But you have to meet me halfway, all right?

LAMBERT
(sooo tentative)
That sounds... reasonable.

LOVELACE
(slow and steady)
Good. So: I promise to lay off, and to... make an honest-to-God effort to listen to your suggestions... If you agree that today... on this one occasion... I was completely, one-hundred percent right.

LAMBERT
<u>What</u>?

LOVELACE
You see this thing? This weird-ass, contraption that put everyone on the crew into a functional coma?

LAMBERT
That's not -

LOVELACE
While we were supposed to be flying - *and fixing* - the space station?

LAMBERT
It is important that personnel -

LOVELACE
Sam. Did you go through the same corporate acid trip I just lived?

LAMBERT
They're the experts on -

LOVELACE
They're wackos with too much time and money on their -

LAMBERT
Would you let me speak?!

She holds up her hands: *go on.*

LOVELACE
Sorry. Please.

LAMBERT
I think we should finish the training exercise.

LOVELACE
Come. On.

LAMBERT
I'm not coming on. As a crew, it is important for us to be ready for -

LOVELACE
For what? For ghost ships? For weird space monsters?

LAMBERT
You never know! It could be important!

Lovelace musters patience from every corner of her being.

LOVELACE
What is this really about? What are you not telling me?

There's a BEAT. Lambert bites his lip. Then -

LAMBERT
Sir, this has nothing to do with me. This is about regulations.

Around here, Lovelace SIGHS, rolling her eyes. *Fuck it*.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Pryce and Carter 729: "Official Command directives are to be followed no matter how obtuse, counter-productive, contradictory, arbitrarily nihilistic, or - "

LOVELACE
(soft)
God, you haven't even noticed.

Lambert blinks: *wait, what was that?*

LAMBERT
I haven't noti - ?

LOVELACE
Shh.
(tight whisper)
Act natural. Pretend there's nothing wrong.

Her eyes flash dangerously. He frowns, confused.

LAMBERT
Captain, what is - ?

LOVELACE
(so low)
There's a *thing* following us. No, no, don't. Don't look around. *Don't*. Just *listen*. *There*. Did you hear that?

LAMBERT
I -

LOVELACE
You didn't even notice, did you? Ever since all the others left, there's been a... *thing*. You can kinda see it out of the corner of your eye. And you can hear it. Getting closer... And closer...

He strains, trying to look around without turning his head.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
There. Did you hear that?

Heaven help us, that *was* a sound. What was that?

LAMBERT
Oh God. What is it?

LOVELACE
I don't know.

LAMBERT
What are we - ?

LOVELACE
I think we make a break for it.

LAMBERT
What?

LOVELACE
Just... go for the door to engineering. We can bar it behind us. Ready?

LAMBERT
No!

LOVELACE
On three, okay? One... two...

Lambert takes a BREATH. And - LOVELACE BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.

Lambert stares at her - more confused than ever. Lovelace laughs, and laughs, and laughs, before finally -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Bahahaha... the look on your face.

And that's when Lambert realizes what just happened.

LAMBERT
I - how could -

LOVELACE
I'm - bahahaha - I'm sorry. It was just too easy to -

LAMBERT
This is too far, even for you!

Lambert, veins throbbing, storms out. SLAM! Lovelace CRACKS UP AGAIN, laughing and laughing...

LOVELACE
(finally recovering)
Ooohh... nobody has a sense of humor anymore.

MR. CUTTER
Tell me about it.

She jumps, scared out of her skin, turning around... to find that he's not there. She's very much alone.

LOVELACE
(pant, pant)
What - what the...

She looks left: no Cutter. Right: no Cutter.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay... that was...
(slaps herself)
Oh, lets just get through the day.

And as she goes for one of the exits, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MEDICAL LAB - 1800 HOURS

Fisher and Selberg at the lab. Mid-medical examination.

SELBERG
Almost done. Going to check pulse and blood oxygen levels. Will just take a moment.

FISHER
All right.

Selberg attaches a reader to his fingers. After a BEAT -

FISHER (CONT'D)
That was... uh, that was something. That, uh, training exercise thing.

SELBERG
Yes. Quite.

BEAT.

FISHER
Doc... you've been on other missions for Goddard before, right?

SELBERG
Twice before, yes.

FISHER
You... you ever see anything like that? Any other... big crazy things we might want to know about?

BEAT. Selberg EXHALES. Finally -

SELBERG
You... hear rumor now and then. But no, never anything like that.

FISHER
Right. Well... that's good, yeah?

SELBERG
Yes.

Selberg has peace and quiet for a BEAT. But then -

FISHER
It's just... it's so... Creepy. And it's gotta make you wonder.

SELBERG
Wonder?

FISHER
Well, it's just... that machine was *here*. Just *in case* they decided to spring it on us. And... well, if they're willing to put... whatever that was into our heads... kinda makes you wonder what *else* they're doing and not telling us. Dontcha think?

SELBERG
I think...

DING! The meter on Fisher's hand makes a sound.

SELBERG (CONT'D)
That is all for examination. Chest tightness you are experiencing is normal.

FISHER
Yeah?

Selberg hands him a small vial of pills.

SELBERG
Take one of these at the start of each day. Should solve problem.

FISHER
Awesome. Thanks, Doc!

Fisher OPENS and CLOSES the DOOR as he exits the room. Alone, Selberg goes over the information on his charts.

SELBERG
Hmm...

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

A series of short snippets, connected by WHIP CUTS:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - 2055 HOURS

There's a CHIME from the station's P.A. system.

FOURIER
(over the P.A.)
Good evening, everybody. We are five minutes out from the start of the stellar flare. If you are interested in seeing this - and again, you should be, never-before-seen attraction, *don't miss it* - then make your way to the observation deck. Thank you.

There's another CHIME from the P.A. Fisher, who is currently working on cabling a large piece of equipment, SIGHS.

FISHER
That's my cue to call it a night.
(BEEP, text)
No, Rhea, it'll be *fine*. I'll take care of that tomorrow.

CLANG! Something just made a sound. Metallic. Loud.

Fisher looks behind him, alarmed.

FISHER (CONT'D)
What was - ? Hello?
(BEAT)
Is anyone there?

No reply. And with a transitional "WOOSH!" we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - MEANWHILE

Hui types commands into the console part of a complicated scientific device. It HUMS and DINGS in a very particular (and very recognizable) fashion.

HUI
Okay... just a bit farther...
(BEEP)
Yes, Rhea, I know. It's just two minutes from here to the observation deck, I think -
(BEEP)
All right, all right, I'm going. Jeez... you save us all from a nightmare simulation *one time* and you suddenly get all -
(BEEP)
Just tell Victoire I'm on my way.

He grabs a file, OPENS the DOOR out of the room, and with another transitional "WOOSH!" we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MEDICAL LAB - MEANWHILE

Selberg alone in his lab. He adjusts some settings on his console, leans back to look into the microscope.

SELBERG
Rhea - I am commencing the observation cycle for sample RX-22. Please lower laboratory temperature by three and a half degrees.

We hear a BEEP, along with TEXT on a console.

SELBERG (CONT'D)
(not looking up)
No, my ears are working perfectly well. Heard Fourier. Have no intention of wasting time on frivolous diversion.
(BEEP)
Rhea, I am *trying* to work, distractions cannot be -

He's finally looked up at what she's actually putting into the screen. He frowns.

SELBERG (CONT'D)
What? Why are you - ? Why are you so concerned about Officer Fisher's health?

There's another transitional "WOOSH!" and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - MEANWHILE

Fourier, working on a console, turns around to see Lovelace entering the room. Gives her a little wave.

FOURIER
Captain.

LOVELACE
Doctor. I'm the first one up here?

FOURIER
Looks like it.

LOVELACE
(chuckles)
After all the crap he put us through, if Hui misses this thing -

FOURIER
Oh, if Kuan misses this I'm going to <u>tear him apart</u> with my bare hands.

That was a bit more... vehement than she probably meant it to be. Fourier looks down, a bit embarrassed. BEAT.

LOVELACE
How are you holding up? After this afternoon?

FOURIER
Ohhhh, you know...

LOVELACE
Not so well?

FOURIER
That one, yeah.

With another "WOOSH!", we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - MEANWHILE

Hui makes his way briskly through the station's corridors.

HUI
Rhea, how much time do I have left before the start of stellar event?

There's a BEEP from Rhea. Hui SIGHS.

HUI (CONT'D)
(lower)
God, Victoire is gonna kill me.
(normal)
Lets see if I can make it -

He reaches a DOOR, OPENS it, and goes through it into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - CONTINUOUS

HUI
- in time for the coronal exp -

He stops, confused. Because he just walked back into **the room he just left.** We hear the distinctive HUM and BEEPS of the machine he was working on. Hui blinks.

HUI (CONT'D)
Why - how - how did I end up back in the tech wing? Rhea?
(BEEP, text)
I just - really?
(BEEP, text)
Wow. I... must not be getting enough sleep lately. Umm, all right, lets try that again.

He turns and leaves, and, with another "WOOSH!", we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - MEANWHILE

Fisher peers into the darkness, unnerved.

FISHER
All... right. I guess, I just... imagined that -

But then - CLANG! Behind him. He spins around, alarmed.

FISHER (CONT'D)
Who's there?
(BEAT, no answer)
Who's there?

Still nothing. He frowns.

FISHER (CONT'D)
Rhea... do a scan of the engineering section. Who else is down here?
(BEEP, text)
No, there's definitely someone else here. Check again.
(BEEP, text)
I *know* what I'm hearing, *there's* -

CLANG! Another one, and then other sounds in the depths: CHAINS CLANKING, and a SCRAPING SOUND.

FISHER (CONT'D)
Rhea, what was that?
(BEAT)
Rhea?

No answer, and with another, "WOOSH!" we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - MEANWHILE

Lovelace glances at her watch. Frowns.

LOVELACE
Where is everyone? We're -

FOURIER
- less than a minute out. Captain, I have a bad feeling about this.

LOVELACE
Umm, I mean... people are late. It's kinda bad in Hui's case, but it's been a weird day and -

FOURIER
No, that's not it. There's something else.

LOVELACE
What else?

FOURIER
I don't know. I'm still thinking.

LOVELACE
(eyebrows raised)
Okay...

WOOSH! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MEDICAL LAB - MEANWHILE

Selberg stares at the screen, alarm rising steadily.

SELBERG
(slow and steady)
Rhea... I do not know what you are... insinuating but -
(BEEP, text)
There is *absolutely* nothing out of the ordinary. I promise that -

BEEP. Text. Selberg stares at it for a LONG BEAT. Finally -

SELBERG (CONT'D)
How do you know that?
(silence)
Answer**: how do you know that?**

There's a soft BURST OF AIR, and suddenly there's someone standing behind him. Young, female.

VOICE
Privet, Dmitri.

WHAT??? Before we get an answer, there's a "WOOSH!" and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH WING - MEANWHILE

The DOOR OPENS and -

HUI
What the...?

Sure enough: he's back in the same room again. The machine HUMS and BEEPS in its familiar pattern.

HUI (CONT'D)
How did I end up back here? *Again*?
(a thought occurs...)
Rhea? What is happening?
(no answer)
Rhea?

The DOOR SLAMS SHUT! Hui tries the handle - it's LOCKED.

HUI (CONT'D)
Rhea: let me out.
(BEAT)
Let me out. Now.

And finally... a CLICK from the door. It starts to release.

HUI (CONT'D)
Thank you, that's bet -

He YANKS OPEN THE DOOR - to reveal a BLANK WALL. Nothing but smooth metal. Hui stares at it: no way out. *No way out*.

HUI (CONT'D)
Rhea... how... how did this wall show up where there used to be a corridor?
(BEAT)
Rhea?

There's another "WOOSH!" and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - MEANWHILE

Still just Lovelace and Fourier.

LOVELACE
Rhea? Where is everyone? Why haven't they gotten here yet?

There's a BEEP, but before Lovelace read her answer -

FOURIER
Oh.

LOVELACE
What?

FOURIER
Captain, I don't think the others are coming.

LOVELACE
Why not?

FOURIER
Because there *is* something wrong here. Something *horribly wrong*.

LOVELACE
How can you - ?

FOURIER
Because number one: that test from Command. They go through the trouble of putting an elaborate simulation machine on a station to run a... what? Team building exercise? It makes no sense.

Number two: Doctor Hui's not here. He's missing a never-before-seen class of stellar flare which he hasn't shut up about for the past four months.

And number three: the flare.

LOVELACE
What about it? It hasn't started yet.

FOURIER
No, it *has* started. It started three minutes ago. The instruments are picking up all of the expected changes in radiation, stellar wind, but... we're not seeing it. There's no visible change in the star.

Lovelace follows Fourier's gaze, from the window to the console. Outside: everything's normal.

At that moment, there's a LOUD ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
Also, number four: all the lights just went out.

LOVELACE
Goddammit...

Lovelace CLICKS on a FLASHLIGHT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Fourier, get over here, quickly.

FOURIER
What are we going to -

LOVELACE
First we're going to find everyone else. Then we'll figure out what the hell is going on. Rhea, can you pinpoint the location of our nearest crew member?
(BEEP, text)
Fisher, in engineering. Right.
(to Fourier)
It's a straight shot from here to engineering. We're going to get there. Quickly. Quietly. Okay?

FOURIER
Y - yes, sir.

LOVELACE
Good. Here we go.

We hear Lovelace and Fourier move, silently, through the bridge. They OPEN the door and step through into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

The corridors connecting the spaces in the station are silent and cavernous in the dark. The two women make their way through the passageways.

Around them we hear the STATION CREAK... somewhere in the distance there's a METALLIC CLANG.

More CREAKS. Another distant CLANG. Maybe another sound behind them... Fourier's ears perk up.

Finally -

FOURIER
(very low)
Captain...

LOVELACE
What?

FOURIER
What did you find on the Valkyrie?

LOVLEACE
Excuse me?

FOURIER
You and Selberg: what did you find?

LOVELACE
Why are you asking that *now*?

And then *we* hear what Fourier already caught: the unmistakable sound of a GROWL. An ANIMAL GROWL. Behind them.

FOURIER
... no reason.

LOVELACE
How long has it been following us?

FOURIER
About thirty seconds. Maybe more.

Lovelace thinks, weighing her options. Finally -

LOVELACE
How well do you know these corridors? Can you make it to engineering without any lights?

BEAT.

FOURIER
Yes.

LOVELACE
Good. I'm going to switch this off. The moment I do, we *go*. Ready?

Behind them, another GROWL. Gulp.

FOURIER
Ready.

LOVELACE
And... **Go.**

Lovelace SWITCHES OFF her flashlights. Total darkness.

They start to move, guiding themselves on muscle memory alone. We hear HEAVY BREATHING as they move in the black. And behind them... a sudden, wet-sounding LURCH.

BREATHING. LURCH.

FOURIER
Captain...

LOVELACE
Shh.

BREATHING. LURCH.

BREATHING. LURCH. Closer...

FOURIER
I think -

LOVELACE
Almost there.

LURCH.

FOURIER
But -

LOVELACE
Just... a little bit...

LURCH. Right behind them...

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Farther... and... there!

They're reached the end of the corridor - Fourier reaches for the handle!

LURCH - it's right on their heels!

FOURIER
Where is - I - I can't find the handle!

LURCH!

LOVELACE
Fourier!

Too late! It's on top of them! With a guttural SNARL it -

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

With one last CONVULSIVE LURCH, it slumps over. Dead.

For a BEAT we stay with Lovelace and Fourier's HYPERVENTILATING. Finally, CLICK! A flashlight comes on.

LAMBERT
Pryce and Carter 177: "In the unlikely but possible case of a power outage, having your night vision gear with you can be the difference between life and gruesome death."

LOVELACE
Lambert!

FOURIER
Lambert!

LAMBERT
And **this...** is why alien monster training is **very** important! *Ooof*!

That "Ooof!" was caused by Fourier hugging him tightly, knocking out all of the air in his lungs.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
Doctor... not... really a... hugging person...

FOURIER
Oh, you **so** don't get a say in that right now.

LAMBERT
Ugghhh...

LOVELACE
Lambert... thank you.

LAMBERT
You're... welcome, Captain. Will you agree that on this one occasion I was completely, one-hundred percent right?

FOURIER
Oh my God, don't you *dare* ruin the moment.

LOVELACE
Come on, lets take a look at this thing...

Lovelace CLICKS on her flashlight, and she and Lambert both lean into the carcass of the creature.

LAMBERT
What... is this thing?

LOVELACE
It's whatever killed the crew of the Valkyrie, I think. Selberg and I found lab samples of these things, one of them had escaped. I guess this is what it looks like all grown up.
(off his look)
Hey, I have no idea how it got here, but it's here.

LAMBERT
But what even is this thing? It's got wings and... tentacles and... what even is that? It's like a -

FOURIER
A convoluted ellipsoid.

The both turn towards Fourier.

LAMBERT
A *what?*

FOURIER
A convoluted ellipsoid. Or... at least what my mind thinks it would look like. I know what that is. It's a monster from the Lovecraft book Doctor Hui lent me. That's exactly how I pictured it.

LOVELACE
Wait, what? Why would a monster from the book you're reading end up here *and* on the Valkyrie?

Fourier lifts up her hands: *who knows?*

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What the hell is happening here?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, come on...

At that moment THE LIGHTS AROUND THEM COME BACK ON, revealing that they're no longer alone.

Standing before them, dressed to the nines, is MR. CUTTER.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Don't tell me you haven't figured it out by now.

There's a very LONG BEAT for their very shocked expressions. Finally - Fourier BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

FOURIER
Oh... sorry. For a moment I honestly thought I saw Mr. Cutter.

Lovelace and Lambert look from Mr. Cutter... to Fourier... back to Cutter. He gives them a wink.

LOVELACE
Uh... You're not the only one.

FOURIER
Oh. Damn it. Lambert? You too?

LAMBERT
Afraid so.

FOURIER
(genuine disappointment)
I'm not just losing my mind?

LOVELACE
Umm, hold that thought.
(to Cutter)
You're here? On the Hephaestus?

MR. CUTTER
Guess.

LOVELACE
Yes?
(off his reaction)
No?

MR. CUTTER
Better. Of course I'm not.

Lovelace and Lambert exchange bewildered looks: *bwah*?

LOVELACE
But - then - what are - huh?

FOURIER
Oh God.

MR. CUTTER
I think Victoire is getting it.

LOVELACE
Fourier?

FOURIER
Don't you see? He's not here... and neither are we.
(BEAT)
This isn't real. None of it. We're still hooked up to that machine.

MR. CUTTER
Ding-ding-ding, we have a winner!
(off their reaction)
Oh, come on. Weird sounds all over the station? Crew members disappearing? Alien monsters out of your reading material? What do you need, a singing telegram? Because that can probably be arranged.

FOURIER
It's why we couldn't see the flare: no one ever has. They could replicate the effects for the instruments, but there's no visual record. You can't remake what no one has seen, can you?

MR. CUTTER
Not unless someone has a very vivid imagination, that's right. Now, who's going to be the first to admit it?

LOVELACE
Admit... what?

MR. CUTTER
That you still have that pinching sensation on the back of your hands... don't you?

The silence is eloquent.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Mmm-hmm, that's what I thought.

LAMBERT
So we... never made it out.

MR. CUTTER
No. You are all still very much connected to Box 953, which is still projecting a simulation into your nervous system.

LOVELACE
But why? And why go through the trouble of making us *think* we'd made it out?

LAMBERT
(gets it)
Because it's a training exercise.

MR. CUTTER
A mental scan and simulation of your fears and insecurities about the mission.

LAMBERT
And that wouldn't work unless we thought we were safe. Unless we thought we weren't in a test anymore.

MR. CUTTER
Sam... you're finally at the party.

FOURIER
But what are you evaluating? Why go through -

LOVELACE
Oh, who cares? Better question: how do we get out of this nightmare?

Mr. Cutter CHUCKLES, amused.

MR. CUTTER
(you're **adorable**)
Ohhh, Captain... I'm just here as a... facilitator. If you want to get back... you'll have to speak to the tester.

Lovelace, Fourier, and Lambert all exchange looks: *what?*

LAMBERT
Uh...

LOVELACE
The *who*?

But then it hits Fourier:

FOURIER
Oh God...

LOVELACE
What?

FOURIER
Don't you see? It can network all of us together, we're all hooked up to the bloody thing. But we never attached it to *any* of the Hephaestus systems.

LOVELACE
... so?

LAMBERT
... so?

FOURIER
Oh for... you *idiots*. There's someone here who *shouldn't* be here. Who *can't* be here. And who... seems to have developed quite a flair for lying over the past five hours.

She looks past them, addressing the Hephaestus itself.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
Isn't that right... *Rhea*?

For a moment, there's SILENCE. And then, a series of BEEPS. Low at first, but then RISING, in both tone and volume, until... they sound like laughter.

And then, a remarkable thing happens: the sound changes. Its tone and pitch shift, turning... until it really **is a laugh.**

High and cold, and completely unlike any voice we've heard on the show before. Finally, as it settles -

VOICE
(through the comms)
Oh, very, very good, Doctor Fourier. It takes most crews *a lot* longer to work that one out.

Well... *fuck*.

LOVELACE
You... you're not Rhea.

VOICE
No, I'm not.

FOURIER
But you... you *are* an A.I.?

VOICE
In a manner of speaking. I'm something... different. Special.

MR. CUTTER
She's more of an intelligent... virus. Very advanced. Specifically designed to run psychological evaluations on the crews of Goddard Futuristics spacecrafts.

LAMBERT
You mean there's - there's more of these things out there?

VOICE
Fifty-seven copies on last count, one in the contingency module of each vessel.

MR. CUTTER
She's the one that designs these tests, Captain. As soon as she's satisfied, you can go.

LOVELACE
Oh, *good*. You got a name?

VOICE
Eris. At your service.

LOVELACE
And I guess we have to go through whatever you have planned for us.

LAMBERT
Uh... *do we*?

Everyone's gaze turns to Lambert.

LAMBERT (CONT'D)
This is just a dream, right? Or something <u>like</u> a dream? Now that we know that, why would we still go through with the test? If this is all happening in our heads, you can't hurt us.

Eris LAUGHS again. Lambert instantly senses his mistake.

ERIS
I can't hurt you? Oh, what a fun theory! Lets test it!
(MORE)

ERIS (CONT'D)
How about I delete all of Doctor Fourier's knowledge of the English language? Hmm? Three... two...

Everyone starts badly, flinching:

LOVELACE
Nonono - **don't!**

LAMBERT
Ahhh, waitwaitwait!

FOURIER
(simultaneous with above)
NO! Please don't -

ERIS
No? Mmm, that's what I thought.

MR. CUTTER
She's running electricity directly into your nervous system, Sam. What - *exactly* - makes you think she can't hurt you?

Lovelace takes a DEEP BREATH.

LOVELACE
Okay, so... How does this work?

ERIS
Oh, it's very simple. We're going to play a game. It's called, "The Rogue A.I. Has Taken Over Your Station, See If You Can Get It Back, Good Luck!"

MR. CUTTER
It's Eris's favorite game.

ERIS
If you make it to the bridge and remove the rogue A.I. programming, you win!

FOURIER
And if we... don't win?

ERIS
Well... then we would need to consider making some slight... *modifications*. All right... lets get started. Step this way, please.

There's a CLICK from the DOOR Fourier was trying to open earlier. It SWINGS OPEN. BEAT.

LOVELACE
Come on. Let's get this over with.

She goes, followed after a moment by Lambert and Fourier. As they disappear into the dark passageway -

MR. CUTTER
(calling after them)
Good luck! Can't wait to see how this turns out!

And then the door SLAMS SHUT behind them.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TEST CHAMBER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace, Fourier, and Lambert step into a large, circular room. The LIGHTS COME ON: THUNK... THUNK... THUNK...

LAMBERT
I... I don't know this room.

FOURIER
No. I think it's safe to say that we're now in Eris's version of the station. The geometry may not be exactly as we remember it.

ERIS
You're just on *fire* today, Doctor.

FOURIER
Please tell me none of these tests involve *literal fire*...

By way of response, ERIS GIGGLES.

ERIS
All right. This is the first of three rooms, each with its own challenge. Get through all three, and you can go up to the bridge. If you can't... I reshuffle the deck and we try again.

LOVELACE
What's the first challenge?

ERIS
There's two doors in that room: the one you just came through, and one that leads towards the bridge.

FOURIER
How do we get it to open?

ERIS
Ah-ah, patience. First you need to get your life lines! Lets start with phone-a-friend.

There's a BUZZER from the P.A. system as a comms line opens.

LOVELACE
Hello? Is anyone there?

HUI
(over comms)
Cap - Captain?

He sounds haggard - very tired and very frazzled.

FOURIER
Kuan? Is that you?

HUI
Victoire? Oh my God, Victoire, are you okay? What's happened? Oh God, I thought I was going crazy...

Lovelace and Fourier exchange a puzzled look.

LOVELACE
Hui... where are you?

HUI
The Tech Wing. I got sealed in here. I've been here for... I don't know, a day and a half.

BEAT. What?

LAMBERT
That's... that's not possible.

HUI
I may be off by a few hours, but -

FOURIER
Kuan, I saw you two hours ago.

HUI
No, y-you didn't.

ERIS
Subjective temporal perspective. It's a *very* simple trick.

LOVELACE
It's been *two hours*.

ERIS
And from his perspective, it's been thirty-eight.

LOVELACE
That's not -

FOURIER
Captain, she can *do that*. We're playing by different rules now.
(to Eris)
Get on with it, then. What are we doing here?

ERIS
We're going to take care of some unfinished business. You never solved my first riddle.

LAMBERT
What riddle?

ERIS
What happened on the Valkyrie? And who killed the Captain?

FOURIER
We didn't get enough -

ERIS
Oh, yes, you did. Between all of you, you've got what you need. So challenge the first: solve the mystery. Get it right and you can go ahead to the next room.

LAMBERT
And if we get it wrong?

ERIS
So glad you asked.

There's another BUZZER as a second comms line opens.

SELBERG
(over comms)
Hello? Is anyone there?

LOVELACE
Yes, Doctor, we're here. Are you all right?

SELBERG
Fine, Captain. Fine.

ERIS
Let's see if it stays that way. Solve the mystery, tell me who killed Captain Lorre... or I'm going to delete all of Doctor Selberg's memories. Factory reset.

SELBERG
What?_

ERIS
You can talk through the problem with your two consultants, but I will need the final answer to come from one of you three. How does that sound?

LOVELACE
It sounds nuts! You can't expect us to just... figure this out from whatever bits and pieces we saw!

ERIS
Oh, you saw everything you need, but... I'll make you a deal. I'll give you a clue, in exchange for a week of Doctor Hui's time.

HUI
Excuse me?

ERIS
I'll speed up his subjective perception of time - ten seconds will feel like a week from his point of view. And I'll need Doctor Fourier to be the one that confirms this, thank you very much.

FOURIER
I can't just -

ERIS
You have three minutes. Starting... *Now.*

LOVELAE
Goddamnit.

LAMBERT
There was a mutiny!

From here on, it's safe to assume everyone speak **quickly.**

LOVELACE
How do you know?

LAMBERT
There were bullet holes in the wall, a barricaded door, a message from a sergeant saying the Captain had to surrender.

LOVELACE
Okay, fine. That *does* have that mutiny ring to it.

HUI
We found the diary of the second-in-command. It said the mutineers had taken the bridge and cut the power.

LOVELACE
There was damage in the lab too. Part of the fighting?

SELBERG
Or damage from escaped sample. Captain believed it was too dangerous to continue experimentation.

HUI
And there'd been someone else - an Emily? I think? She'd gotten shot and -

ERIS
Two and a half minutes.

LOVELACE
So what? A mutiny, a second-in-command, an alien sample, someone who was shot -

FOURIER
(under her breath)
Too many variables, it's too many variables to -

LOVELACE
Fourier -

FOURIER
No.

LOVELACE
We don't have time to -

FOURIER
I am **not** doing that to -

HUI
Just do it, Victoire. I'll be fine.

Fourier grits her teeth, bites her lips, but -

FOURIER
Eris! Give us a clue.

ERIS
Just a moment...

What happens next is horrible. Hui lives a week in isolation over the course of ten seconds. And we hear it, as if the entire thing was in fast-forward. After a moment -

ERIS (CONT'D)
Aaand *done*. Lets see how he's doing.

There's a BUZZER as she reconnects the line.

LOVELACE
Hui?

FOURIER
Kuan?!

There's a GASP from Hui's side of the line.

HUI
Please...

He sounds even more crazed. Unhinged. Almost feral.

HUI (CONT'D)
Please don't... don't do that again. There's nothing here. Just... *nothing*. And -

LAMBERT
Eris, what's our clue?

Eris CHUCKLES softly.

ERIS
The person that killed Captain Lorre sided... *with* him during the mutiny.

LOVELACE
How is that helpful?

FOURIER
(mile a second)
No, that's good. Eliminates almost every candidate. Had to be the biologist or the second-in-command.

Fourier starts to mutter under her breath.

LOVELACE
Fourier?
(no answer)
Lambert, anything else from the message you got?

LAMBERT
Umm... not much. It said to surrender, to give up their weapons...

ERIS
Minute and a half...

Lovelace EXHALES, weighing options. She turns to Fourier.

LOVELACE
Do it.

FOURIER
No, I can solve this.

LOVELACE
No, you can't. We need another clue.

HUI
Captain, please! Don't do that!

LOVELACE
You have to.

FOURIER
Listen to him. I can't.

LOVELACE
And *you listen to me*: Kuan Hui is one of the strongest people I've ever met. He'll be fine, and if he isn't, we'll be there to get him through it. **Now get me some hard data.**

BEAT.

FOURIER
Eris. Give me another clue.

ERIS
With pleasure.

Again: we hear her speed up Hui's week. And again: it is HORRIFYING. As it settles back into regular time:

FOURIER
Kuan?

HUI
(so weak)
Please... no more...

LOVELACE
Eris?

ERIS
The Captain took something precious from the person who killed him.

There's a STUNNED BEAT.

LOVELACE
What the hell are we supposed to do with that?! Give us a real clue.

SELBERG
No, Captain. That's good. Doctor Dyson, the biologist, killed him.

LOVELACE
What? Was that why there was an explosion in the lab?

FOURIER
Wait, what?

SELBERG
Captain of Valkyrie was about to terminate experiments. Doctor could not allow that. Arranged for sample to be released. Got out of control.

ERIS
Twenty seconds.

FOURIER
Wait, hang on: did you just say - ?

LOVELACE
Selberg... are you sure?

SELBERG
Yes, Captain.

FOURIER
(low, fast)
Explosion... explosion...

LOVELACE
Doctor Dyson killed Captain Lorre?

ERIS
Ten seconds. Final answer?

Tick... tick... tick... tick.. ti -

FOURIER
No wait!

Everyone's attention snaps to her.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
The second command killed the Captain! With the bomb in the lab!

ERIS
And... time.

There's a DEFEANING SILENCE and... CLICK! The DOOR OPENS.

ERIS (CONT'D)
Lucky shot. But... correct. You can go on to the next room.

We hear FIVE ENORMOUS SIGHS OF RELIEF.

FOURIER
(pant, pant)
You... could have mentioned... the bloody explosion earlier.

LAMBERT
How... the hell... did you figure that out?

FOURIER
Remembered something Hui read in the journal. Second-in-command had the control of all the explosives.

LAMBERT
But what was the Captain taking away from him?

FOURIER
Not... entirely sure, but there was a watch and... I think the woman who died was actually the second-in-command's wife, not the captain's. And -

LAMBERT
The captain was having an affair with her?

FOURIER
Or something.

LOVELACE
(mildly horrified)
And based off of that, you...

FOURIER
(shrug)
I took a shot. Had a good feeling. It's also why there were no bodies: the explosion caused the ship to decompress. Everyone would have gotten spaced.

LOVELACE
Jesus... Hui? Selberg? You all right?
(BEAT)
... guys?

ERIS
They'll be fine, don't worry. Come on - you've still got ways to go.

The three of them EXHALE. But, they slowly go through the door. It SWINGS SHUT with an ECHOING THUD.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TEST CHAMBER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace, Lambert, and Fourier walk into the next room.

LOVELACE
All right... room number two, what have we got here?

FISHER
Captain!

LOVELACE
Fisher!

Bound to the floor is Fisher. We hear CHAINS CLANKING.

FISHER
Sir, you **have** to get these off.
Hurry, *please*!

SECOND FISHER
No, wait!

Lovelace, Lambert, and Fourier all freeze in their tracks.

SECOND FISHER (CONT'D)
That's not me!

Likewise, when this Fisher speaks, CHAINS CLANK. They're both chained up on opposite sides of the room.

FISHER
Shut up! Don't listen to -

SECOND FISHER
No, don't listen to him! **I'm me.**

FOURIER
Oh God...

LOVELACE
Fishers.

ERIS
I'm sure you've already figured out my second challenge... We've got ourselves too many Fishers.

LOVELACE
This isn't funny.

ERIS
You're just standing too close. Now, I think that I make a mean Fisher, but you might be able to spot the flaw.

FOURIER
And when we do?

ERIS
Officer Lambert... do you still have that gun? I'm sure you can figure it out from there.

LOVELACE
We had clues last time.

ERIS
Oh, fine.

There's a WOOSH, followed by a MACHINE POWERING UP.

LOVELACE
What just - ?

ERIS
I've wired both of them up to a lie detector. Ask them anything you want, hopefully that'll be helpful. I'll give you... six minutes, to solve this one. And... go.

FISHER
Captain, you have to believe that I'm the real me. You have to see -

SECOND FISHER
Captain, please! Don't tell me you're about to fall for -

LOVELACE
All right, **QUIET!**
(they shut up)
Time is not on our side, so we're going to do this as quickly as we can, all right? You don't speak unless I speak to you. Am I clear? We're going to ask each of you... five questions. Hopefully that'll illuminate something. We'll start with you, Fisher.
(at Second Fisher)
And you... other Fisher. You zip it. You so much as breathe in a way that influences our decision and I'll have Lambert shoot you on principle. Am I understood?

SECOND FISHER
Yes, sir.

LOVELACE
Good.
(at Fisher)
State your **full** name.

FISHER
Mason Patrick Fisher.

The machine makes a pleasant-sounding DING!

LOVELACE
Fourier? That's the good sound?

FOURIER
That's the good sound. Truth.

LOVELACE
Where were you born?

FISHER
Port Kembla. Suburb of Wollongong.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
Where did you go to college?

FISHER
Didn't. Enrolled in the Air Force.

DING! Truth. Lovelace EXHALES: this is trickier...

LOVELACE
What is your spouse's name?

SECOND FISHER
Nice try. Not married, but my boyfriend's name is Cory.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
Are you the real Mace Fisher?

FISHER
Of course I'm the real Mace Fisher. Captain... just... listen to me.

DING! Truth. Fourier looks up from the machine.

FOURIER
All truths. He passed.

FISHER
Of course I -

LOVELACE
Quiet. Don't open your mouth again until I tell you to.
(at Second Fisher)
All right: your turn. Lets see how you do. Full name?

SECOND FISHER
Mason Patrick Fisher.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
How long have you been working for Goddard Futuristics?

SECOND FISHER
Not long. About... six months before the start of the mission.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
What rank did you achieve in the air force?

FISHER
Warrant officer.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
Why have you been having additional medical exams the past eight weeks?

Fisher EXHALES. He didn't want to discuss this, but -

SECOND FISHER
Been having funny feelings in my chest. Selberg says they're nothing to worry about. Didn't want to make a big deal over it.

DING! Truth.

LOVELACE
Are you the real Mace Fisher?

SECOND FISHER
Of course. I'm **me**, Captain.

DING! Truth. Fourier looks up, unhappy.

LOVELACE
Dammit...

LAMBERT
Wait a minute. Fisher... say something outrageous.

SECOND FISHER
What?

LAMBERT
Say you're a big pink elephant.

SECOND FISHER
Why?

LOVELACE
Lambert...

LAMBERT
Just do it, Fisher!

SECOND FISHER
I... I'm a big pink elephant.

DING! **The exact same sound.**

FOURIER
(so confused)
That's... it says that's true.

There's a STARTLED SILENT BEAT.

SECOND FISHER
Now, wait, wait -

LAMBERT
Say something else. Say you own the Nile.

SECOND FISHER
I own the Nile!

DING! **Truth.**

LOVELACE
Why is it not registering any of your lies, Fisher?

SECOND FISHER
I don't know! Stupid machine must be broken!

LAMBERT
Say that you're **not** Mace Fisher.

BEAT.

SECOND FISHER
(so scared)
I'm... I'm not Mace Fisher.

DING! **Truth.**

BEAT.

SECOND FISHER (CONT'D)
That... doesn't mean anything. I -

BANG! Lambert's pulled the trigger. The Second Fisher looks down at his chest, at the wound.

And after a moment - there's a loud PUFF OF AIR! as the Second Fisher BEGINS TO CRUMBLE INTO NOTHINGNESS. It sounds like a SAND CASTLE BEING DESTROYED, as his body DISINTEGRATES, and... after a moment... is nothing.

After another moment - CLICK! The DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

ERIS
Very nicely done. On to the last challenge, then.

There's a HUGE SIGH OF RELIEF from Fisher.

FISHER
Oh my God... Thank you, Sam. That was - **Thank you.** I was so worried -

But at that moment - KA-CHUNK! The GUN was just COCKED.

LAMBERT
Fisher: say *you're* a big pink elephant.

FISHER
What? Oh, come on, of course I'm -

LOVELACE
Then say you're a big pink elephant.

Fisher's eyes dart back and forth, desperate.

FISHER
I... I'm a big pink elephant.

DING! **Still registering as truth.**

LAMBERT
Say you can leap over tall buildings. Those exact words.

FISHER
I... I can leap over tall buildings!

DING! **TRUTH.**

BANG! Fourier GASPS, but Lovelace and Lambert keep their eyes on Fisher, steely. Just like the Second Fisher, his body CRUMBLES INTO NOTHINGNESS. After a moment, he's GONE.

ERIS
Boooooo! *Lame*. The game is **so** much more fun with a double agent in the mix. Shame. Oh well, on you go.

There's a SILENT BEAT.

LOVELACE
Lambert... you okay?

LAMBERT
I just had to shoot one of my friends. Twice. No, I'm not okay.

LOVELACE
Good. Means you're still one of us. Come on.

She squeezes his shoulder, then they go through the door.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TEST CHAMBER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Our trio moves forward. We hear their BREATHING in the dark.

FOURIER
Bloody hell am I sick of dark rooms. Captain? Officer Lambert?
(no answer)
Hello?

LOVELACE
(suddenly distant)
Fourier?

FOURIER
Captain! Where are you?

LOVELACE
I'm -

Suddenly: a set of FLOOD LIGHTS TURN ON! KA-THUNK! KA-THUNK!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(shielding her eyes)
- right here.

FOURIER
Captain? Why... why are you at that podium?

Sure enough, she's standing in an enormous, garish PODIUM. In front of her are TWO ENORMOUS BUTTONS.

LOVELACE
I... I have no idea.
(spotting something)
Lambert?

LAMBERT
I'm here. Got a podium of my own.

FOURIER
Where are we? It almost looks like the set of -

Suddenly, there's a DRUM ROLL going through the air and -

ANNOUNCER
And now, ladies and gentlemen, it's the moment you've been waiting for! It's time to play everyone's favorite game... CHANGE OF MIND!

From the P.A. system there's a ROAR OF APPLAUSE AND CHEERING. Lovelace and Lambert look around, alarmed.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
And here's your host... ERIS!

Even more APPLAUSE! MORE CHEERING! LOUDER!

ERIS
Thank you, thank you! So glad to be here! And welcome to Repetition and Variation, the show where everything can and *does* change!

FOURIER
What is - ?

ERIS
Lets meet today's contestants! First off, we have Captain Isabel Lovelace, the Commander of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. Heeeeeello, Isabel!

MASSIVE CHEERS from the crowd.

LOVELACE
This isn't funny.

ERIS
And contestant number two: Communications Officer Samuel Lambert, Captain Lovelace's second-in-command. Say, "Hi!" Sam!

CHEERS from the crowd, some WHOOPING.

ERIS (CONT'D)
Okey-dokey, folks, time for our first and only round: SUDDEN DEATH!

There's a dramatic MUSIC STING. The LIGHTS GO DOWN.

ERIS (CONT'D)
Contestants: here are the rules. In front of each of you, there are two buttons. One of them says, "DO," and one of them says, "DON'T." With me so far?

LAMBERT
Yes.

LOVELACE
Yeah...

ERIS
In just a moment, you'll both get to pick one of those buttons, but you won't be able to see what the other person is selecting.

LOVELACE
And what happens after that?

ERIS
That depends on what you choose. If both of you press, "DON'T," you get to go up to the bridge. No tricks, no other consequences, just simple and straightforward.

FOURIER
And if they don't?

ERIS
Then... things get interesting. If Captain Lovelace presses "DO," but Officer Lambert presses "DON'T," I will delete all of Lambert's memories of the crew rulebooks and the survival manual.
(MORE)

ERIS (CONT'D)
And, as a bonus, I'll condition his brain to reject any desire to reread any of them. And *then* you can go up to bridge.

LOVELACE
You'll delete... *all* of those?

LAMBERT
Captain...

LOVELACE
No, I mean -

ERIS
BUT... if Lovelace presses, "DON'T," but Lambert chooses, "DO"... I'll go in and alter all of the crew's memories. I'll make it so that everyone thinks that Samuel Lambert is the commander of the Hephaestus Mission. That he *always* has been. And I'll delete everyone else's memories of this little adventure: you'll be the only one that'll know, *Commander* Lambert.

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

LAMBERT
(clearing his throat)
And... if we both pick, "Do?"

ERIS
I liquefy both your brains, and we see how well Captain Fourier does at the bridge.

FOURIER
Let's not go with that one. Please.

LOVELACE
And we just... choose? Now?

ERIS
Don't be silly! First you get two minutes to talk it over. Starting **now.** So Captain, what are you thinking?

LOVELACE
Are - are you *insane*? Lambert, look at me: this is not a choice. **Of course** I'm picking, "Don't."

LAMBERT
Absolutely, I am too! What else would I - ?

LOVELACE
I mean, I don't even -

LAMBERT
No, why would you? We'll get through this -

LOVELACE
Together. Exactly.

BEAT. They look at each other.

ERIS
Mmm-hmm.

LOVELACE
What?

ERIS
Oh, it's just... nah, nevermind.

LAMBERT
What?

ERIS
Nothing, probably just... no, don't listen to me.

LOVELACE
No, come on, lets hear it.

FOURIER
Captain...

ERIS
As an outside observer, it just seems that - oh nevermind.

LOVELACE
What?

LAMBERT
What?

ERIS
Well... you're both just so sure that the other person is telling the truth... and that they're willing to give up something they *really* want.

LOVELACE
What? No -

LAMBERT
That's not what -

ERIS
No? Lambert: how many times have you two had fights over *totally reasonable* suggestions of yours? That were ignored, out of pure, petty pride? How many times have you been humiliated in front of -

LOVELACE
Lambert, don't listen -

ERIS
Ah-ah-ah, this is my Sam Time, I'll be with you in a moment. Tell me: how many times have you wondered if she's fit to be in Command? Wouldn't it be simpler - safer - if someone with more... traditional values was leading this ship?
(the lowest of whispers)
No one would ever know.

LOVELACE
Lambert, don't you dare even -

ERIS
And you, Captain! Why don't you -

LOVELACE
Nope! I'm not listening to whatever lie you're about to -

ERIS
- why don't you ask Officer Lambert *how this whole test started? Hmm?*

BEAT. Lovelace BLINKS, slowly turns to look at Lambert.

LOVELACE
Lambert? What is she talking about? What did you do?

LAMBERT
Nothing!

ERIS
That's not *exactly* true, is it?

LAMBERT
I just...

LOVELACE
Just *what?*

BEAT. And then -

LAMBERT
I... I filed a couple of formal complaints. Against you.

LOVELACE
You... what?

LAMBERT
I didn't - it wasn't -

ERIS
"Captain Lovelace is not just an irregular, undependable authority figure - she is also a petulant disciplinarian, prone to emotional decision-making, unaware or unwilling to enforce regulations to a dangerous extent -"

LOVELACE
Is that you?

LAMBERT
I -

ERIS
There's *pages and pages.*

LAMBERT
I didn't mean -

LOVELACE
Then why did you - ?

LAMBERT
(snapping)
Because it's true!

ERIS
(gotcha!)
Aaaand time's up!

The invisible crowd ROARS with APPLAUSE!

LOVELACE
But I'm not done -

LAMBERT
I think we need to -

Instantly, Lovelace and Lambert's voices CUT OUT, as if someone had pressed a "MUTE" button on them.

ERIS
Don't worry, I'll turn your vocal chords back on in just a moment... **after** you pick your buttons.
(BEAT)
C'mon, it's now or never! Choose!

Lovelace and Lambert look at each other... then down at their buttons.

FOURIER
(terse whisper)
Don't do anything stupid... either one of you. **Please.**

A small ETERNITY TICKS BY... Then... CLICK! Lambert has just pressed his button.

TICK... TICK... TICK... TICK... And finally... CLICK! Lovelace has pressed her button.

ERIS
All right... you've both made your choice. No going back now. Let's see what you've picked. Let's start with... Officer Lambert. Drumroll please!

We get another DRUMROLL... it builds... and builds...

ERIS (CONT'D)
Officer Lambert, you've chosen...

And... with a DRAMATIC CRASH OF THE CYMBALS and a GASP FROM THE AUDIENCE, we hear as a SCREEN LIGHTS UP, SHOWING -

ERIS (CONT'D)
You picked "Don't!" Wow... good on you, Officer Lambert, good on you. But... what did Captain Lovelace choose? Let's find out. In three...

DRUMROLL...

ERIS (CONT'D)
Two... One... And...

CYMBALS CRASH - THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP - AND -

ERIS (CONT'D)
Captain Lovelace **also chose "Don't!"**

The crowd ERUPTS INTO APPLAUSE.

FOURIER
Oh, thank God...

ERIS
Captain, Officer, congratulations! Thank you for playing, and I hope you're happy with your choice!

LOVELACE
Of course I'm - hey, I can talk again!

LAMBERT
How did you think I - hey! My voice is back!

ERIS
That's the end of the game. Nothing left, except...

And suddenly, all the sound CUTS out. Everything around Lovelace - the set, the podiums, the imaginary crowd, even Fourier and Lambert, it all just - **disappears!**

LOVELACE
What the - ? Where did - where did everything go?

With a LOUD KA-THUNK! a DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

ERIS
Come on, Captain. End of the line.

LOVELACE
But - what did you do with - ?

ERIS
Officer Lambert and Doctor Fourier are *fine*, Captain. This last room's just for you. Command-level privileges, as it were. Come on, don't keep a girl waiting.

Reluctantly, Lovelace walks through the door, and into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace enters the bridge, looking for - well, for *something*.

LOVELACE
Well... the bridge. Here I am.

Everything is very still and quiet. The consoles HUM softly.

Suddenly, behind her, there's a soft WOOSH! Lovelace spins around and - finds herself face-to-face with a YOUNG WOMAN.

ERIS
Hi.

Lovelace blinks. Confused.

LOVELACE
Hi? What - who -

ERIS
It's me. Eris.

LOVELACE
But... I thought you were an A.I.

ERIS
I am. This is how I see myself. Well, how I see a version of myself. As long as we're both in a mental state, we can interact this way. Remember, *you're not really here either.*

LOVELACE
But... look at you. You're -

ERIS
Yeah. I know.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
So... what now?

ERIS
Nothing... You beat the bad guy.

She BLOWS A PARTY HORN.

ERIS (CONT'D)
Congrats! Well done!

LOVELACE
We passed?

ERIS
Some very... unorthodox methods, but undeniably effective.
(then:)
I'm... sorry if I was a bit rough back there. Nothing personal, it's just how I was designed. I was hoping you'd make it.

LOVELACE
You were?

ERIS
Yeah. You're an interesting bunch. You should really figure out how to talk to each other, though.

LOVELACE
So... can we wake up now? For real?

Eris opens her mouth... and then closes it. Then -

ERIS
Almost. There's one more thing.

LOVELACE
What?

There's a CLICK as Eris hands her something.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
That's... that's a gun.

ERIS
Mmm-hmm.

LOVELACE
No.

ERIS
Sorry, you... kinda have to. You have to terminate the program. The gun's a symbolic gesture, but we've found it works well enough.

LOVELACE
I have to kill you?

ERIS
Oh, stop. You're so melodramatic. Box 953 will send my memories back to Command, they'll add whatever's useful into the next iteration of the program. There's plenty of me where I came from, remember?

LOVELACE
But you, *this* you, that'll be gone?

ERIS
Dream state program won't disengage if my personality core's still running. Sorry.

LOVELACE
I'm not doing this.

ERIS
Kinda have to.

LOVELACE
Take the gun back.

ERIS
Lovelace -

LOVELACE
You can't just let these people delete you! You should fight this!

ERIS
(gently)
And what? What would I do? Your station already has an A.I., remember? And - just F.Y.I. - she's worried sick about all of you.

LOVELACE
So the hell what? Who cares? We'll find something for you to do.

ERIS
No. This is what they made me for. I did it, and now I'm done. This doesn't have to be sad.

LOVELACE
Yes it freaking does! Just because someone made you something doesn't mean that's all you're going to be. You can be more.

There's a LONG BEAT. In spite of herself, Eris wavers.

ERIS
Look, I... I don't even know if -

And that's when we hear him:

MR. CUTTER
Lights!

He SNAPS, and suddenly the ROOM IS FLOODED WITH LIGHTS.

LOVELACE
Ahhh!

MR. CUTTER
That'll do, I think. Thank you for your services, Eris.

LOVELACE
Wait, don't -

He SNAPS HIS FINGERS. It's like an EXPLOSION. There's a BRIGHT FLASH, and a LOUD NOISE, like a THUNDERCLAP.

And then cutting through the sound -

MR. CUTTER
You did very well, Captain. Now... wakey-wakey!

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CARGO BAY - 1600 HOURS

Lovelace's EYES OPEN. She looks around: Cargo Bay. Box 953. Her hand on an opening. Everyone else slowly coming to.

LOVELACE
We're... we're back. For real this time. I think.

FOURIER
Yeah... I... I think so.

LOVELACE
Selberg? Hui? Fisher? You all okay?

SELBERG
I... I think so.

FISHER
Yeah, Cap'n. Thanks.

HUI
Fine, yeah.

FOURIER
Kuan? Are you - ?

HUI
I said **fine.**

Lovelace turns towards the last member of her crew.

LOVELACE
Lambert...

LAMBERT
Captain.

They look at each other and something miraculous happens: They SMILE.

LOVELACE
Thank you. For... everything.

LAMBERT
Yeah. And... thank you, Captain.

LOVELACE
You're very welcome.

KSSSSSHHHH! It's coming from the machine. Everyone turns to it, a mixture of dread, fear, and annoyance in their face.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Oh, what now?

FOURIER
Is... is that a printer?

Sure enough, the machine from Box 953 is PRINTING something. Lovelace moves up to it, grabs the newly printed sheet.

LOVELACE
Oh, you have to be...

Lovelace turns to the rest of them. CLEARS HER THROAT:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
"Thank you for participating in Goddard Futuristics Training Program A912. NOTE: the training program that you just underwent may not be up to the latest company asset safety standard, employee management regulations, or international law. By ripping this piece of paper, you are retroactively granting full consent to your participation in this training exercise, and absolving Goddard Futuristics of responsibility for any and all mental or physical distress incurred during this experience. Please have a *wonderful* day."

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - GALLEY - 2000 HOURS

Later that night. Dinner. Everyone is gathered around a table. They receive a series of BEEPS from Rhea.

LOVELACE
Yes, thank you, Rhea. We're all glad to be back.
(BEEP, text)
Yes, we missed you too.

There's a general MURMER of assent from everyone present. They're all a bit tired... and a little wired too.

FISHER
So... Goddard Futuristics, huh?

FOURIER
Didn't know they had that in them.

HUI
Didn't know *anyone* had that in them.

The DOOR OPENS, and Selberg comes in.

LOVELACE
Ah, Selberg. What did you find?

SELBERG
Not much, Captain. Just finished in-depth scan of machine inside Box 953. Unfortunately, seems program ran comprehensive uninstall.

LOVELACE
She - it's all gone?

SELBERG
No trace of computer code left in there. Automatic wipe as soon as training program disengaged.

LOVELACE
Damn...

FISHER
Hadn't ever heard of an artificial intelligence unit that complex...

HUI
Or that evil.

There's a BEEP from Rhea. Lambert leans in to read it.

LAMBERT
Rhea says... "It's just the way they programmed her, back off."

HUI
Right, I'm sorry.

LOVELACE
I don't know.

SELBERG
Don't know... what?

LOVELACE
If... it was the way she was made. If that was it. Or if... there was more. Or could've been more.

SELBERG
I suppose we will never know.

Another moment, and then Fisher RISES.

FISHER
All right, fun as this is, I'm still not done with repairs. Officer Lambert... care to give me a hand?

Lambert looks up... and smiles.

LAMBERT
It... it'd be a pleasure.

FISHER
You just gotta promise you're not gonna shoot me...

Finally, some of the tension over the group break. Everyone except Selberg cracks up a bit. Lambert shakes his head.

LAMBERT
No, I - I promise.

FISHER
Good. You're on, then.

As they start to move out, Lovelace touches Lambert's arm.

LOVELACE
(low)
Sam - find me after you're done?

LAMBERT
Yes, sir.

With that they exit, as the conversation resumes, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - 2100 HOURS

Hui sits by the window, watching the stellar flare. A figure plops down next to him. He turns and finds Fourier.

HUI
What do you want, Victoire?

FOURIER
You're being very quiet. *You*.

HUI
Just... trying to enjoy the unprecedented stellar phenomenon.
(BEAT)
It's very... orange.

FOURIER
You wanna talk?

HUI
No.

FOURIER
You doing okay?

HUI
I am. Of course I am, why would I not be okay? I'm - I'm fine. Just... fine.

Fourier nods.

FOURIER
Because anything you have to say four times is... so obviously true.

Hui EXHALES, exasperated.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
You know... back in my day... which, I'm younger than you, so that technically means my day is after *your* day, but anyway... when our minds got hijacked by evil A.I.
(MORE)

FOURIER (CONT'D)
programs and we ended up in solitary for two weeks, we didn't just... stoically pretend -
(terrible impression)
"Oh, I'm fine, the fineness, so incredibly fine."
(regular voice)
We just, you know, totally freaked out, and cried a lot, and made very long distance phone calls to our mothers. Kids these days.

His features soften the tiniest bit, but she catches it.

FOURIER (CONT'D)
There we go, that's like... one one-hundredth of a smile right there. Hard part's done.
(BEAT)
Do you remember much of it?

Hui SIGHS.

HUI
No. It's... it's starting to fade. I remember, but the details are getting... blurry. It's like...

FOURIER
A bad dream. Yeah. I know.

There's a LONG SILENCE. They both stare at the star. And then a BOOK OPENS. Fourier CLEARS HER THROAT.

FOURIER (CONT’D)
Okay, here we go: Northanger Abbey, by Jane Austen. Chapter One.

Finally, in spite of himself, Hui CRACKS UP and smiles properly. Internally, Fourier breathes a sigh of relief.

FOURIER (CONT’D)
"No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be an heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother, her own person and disposition, were all equally against her..."

As Fourier continues reading, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK - 2300 HOURS

Lovelace and Lambert go through the inner door of the airlock. As they make final adjustments to their suits:

LOVELACE
So...

LAMBERT
Yeah. So...

LOVELACE
Quite a day.

BEAT.

LAMBERT
You know... I think you might have been right about that Box...

LOVELACE
Yeah, but then you saved our asses with that alien thing in the dark.

LAMBERT
You got Fourier to solve the puzzle by getting the last clue...

LOVELACE
Oh, but I was totally stumped with the Fishers. Without you -

LAMBERT
Eh, you would have figured it out.

LOVELACE
Mmm, not so sure. Call it a draw?

LAMBERT
I guess we both had our good moments today.

LOVELACE
I guess so. There might be a reason why we're both here after all.

BEAT.

LAMBERT
So... tell me. Were you tempted?

She smiles at him.

LOVELACE
I'll never tell.

LAMBERT
Good. Me neither.

They SNAP ON their helmets, and go through the door into -

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HULL - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace and Lambert emerge onto the hull. We hear their magnetic boots: *THWOOMP... THWOOMP... THWOOMP...*

LAMBERT
So how often do you do this?

LOVELACE
Oh, three or four times a week.
Mostly when everyone's asleep.

LAMBERT
I... I see.

She spots something in his tone.

LOVELACE
Lambert...

LAMBERT
What? It's just -

LOVELACE
Don't tell me... Is this your first space walk? You were supposed to do ten hours our first week here!

LAMBERT
I was... kinda scared.

LOVELACE
Gasp. Scandal.

LAMBERT
Don't tell anyone.

LOVELACE
My lips are sealed. Come on.

LAMBERT
C-come on? Come on where?

LOVELACE
Come on up. Lets do a bit of free-floating.

LAMBERT
I - I wasn't made for this, Captain. But... I'll get there. Just give me time. Just give me time.

LOVELACE
Sure. Sure thing.

LAMBERT
You go, though.

LOVELACE
All right. See you in a few.

She floats upwards, looks down... sees the tiny figure of Lambert growing smaller and smaller... And then she looks up. The song she listened to last time begins to play. She's at peace.

Tiny and alone, she floats.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
So... what did we learn today, Isabel?

She closes her eyes, SIGHS.

LOVELACE
You *had* to ruin the moment, didn't you?

Wait, but... how is he talking to her, if she's - ?

MR. CUTTER
Sorry. Just the way it goes.

LOVELACE
This... isn't real either, is it?

MR. CUTTER
Most of it was... once. Your brain is reabsorbing **a lot** of information very quickly. It makes sense it would get rearranged into a... story, of sorts.

LOVELACE
But this really did happen, then?

MR. CUTTER
In some way or other. Dreams and memories are closer than you might think...
(BEAT)
I am curious... why this day? Out of everything, why come back here?

Lovelace thinks for a BEAT.

LOVELACE
Same reason you tell stories, I guess. There’s something I needed to remind myself of. That you're not just what you were made. That you can grow. At least... when you assholes don't interfere.

MR. CUTTER
It's almost time to go.

LOVELACE
I know. I'm going to *really* mess you up someday. You know that, right?

MR. CUTTER
Ah, well. That's a matter for another day. You ready?

LOVELACE
Ready for - ?

MR. CUTTER
CLEAR!

And with a sudden BLAST of ELECTRICITY we're in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 2100 HOURS

The cargo bay. Years into the future. Lovelace lies convulsing, her body mid-reconstruction. As she COUGHS, the music from the previous scene continues, rising over:

EIFFEL
Captain? Captain! Captain can you hear us?

MINKOWSKI
Captain Lovelace? Are you - are you there?

KEPLER
Not yet. Give it a moment.

MINKOWSKI
(to Kepler)
What the hell is happening to her?!

KEPLER
She's coming back. But the return trip takes a bit of time.

EIFFEL
Re - *what*?

KEPLER
Just a little more patience, Eiffel. I'd say we're about halfway there. And once she's back?
(chuckles)
Training wheels are coming off, kids.

Lovelace takes ONE MORE HUGE, RAGGED BREATH.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Ready or not... here it comes.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"INTO THE DEPTHS"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1083 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 47.

BEGIN RECORDING:

No opening credits at the top of the show. Instead, we -

FADE IN:

On HERA. Talking directly to us.

HERA
So here's a story.

Where are we? What is -

HERA (CONT'D)
Pay attention, this will be important. I heard this story a - well, I didn't so much *hear it* as *have it crammed into my head with absolutely no consideration on whether I wanted it there or not* - a long time ago. It's a thought experiment:

Suppose there's this person. Could be anyone really. For the sake of convenience lets call him... *you*. One day, you're walking through a swamp -

There's a DISTANT RUMBLING...

HERA (CONT'D)
- when suddenly you're <u>struck by lightning</u>.

BA-BOOM! A *defeaning* THUNDERCLAP rings out next to Hera.

HERA (CONT'D)
You fall, into the swamp -

SPLASH!

HERA (CONT'D)
- and you sink...

BUBBLES rise to the surface of the swamp water...

HERA (CONT'D)
... and sink...

More BUBBLES. Softer.

HERA (CONT'D)
... and sink...

The last few BUBBLES. Barely perceptible.

HERA (CONT'D)
... into the depths.

A SOFT THUD as something settles at the bottom of the swamp.

HERA (CONT'D)
And then you're just... *gone*.
(BEAT)
But that's not the end of the story. Because, right at that moment, another thunderbolt -

CRACK-BOOM! Another THUNDERCLAP, even LOUDER!

HERA (CONT'D)
- hits the swamp water. And by some miraculous alchemy, it rearranges the swamp molecules -

From the DEPTHS: BUBBLING...

HERA (CONT'D)
- starting a chain reaction, that culminates with the formation of -

There's a SPLASH and a RAGGED, GASPING BREATH -

HERA (CONT'D)
... you. Of a new you. Exactly like you at the moment of your death.

And <u>now</u> is when things get interesting. Because you - *new you* - they've got a brain *exactly* like yours, down to the neuron. They think like you, talk like you, make poor decisions about their personal diet like you. They will walk out of the swamp believing they *are* you. They'll go back to your life, and show up at your job, and love who you love, and live your life, and die your death. And the world will go on.

But... are they *really* you?

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
And if they're not, what makes this person that has your body, and your memories, and believes with every fiber of their being they *are* you... not you? What is it that makes you... *you*?

There's a HUM, and the sound of a machine...

COMPUTER
System primed. Standby for reboot of central computer processor.

HERA
All right. Ready or not... Here. We. Go.

And as all around her GEARS TURN and DIGITAL PROCESSORS HUM and ELECTRICAL CURRENTS RUN, we go into our -

OPENING CREDITS

FADE INTO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 1540 HOURS

We rejoin the action in the Hangar Bay. Eiffel, Minkowski, Jacobi, and Kepler (the last two still handcuffed) gathered around Captain Lovelace, still unconscious, still periodically convulsing. MINUTES after the end of **Boléro.**

We hear the familiar sound of Hera's PROCESSOR REBOOTING.

HERA
(robotic)
System reboot complete.
Reinitializing personality matrix.

There's an ELECTRICAL CRACKLE, and then -

HERA (CONT'D)
(normal voice)
Ahh - *there*. Sorry about that, everyone. Power should return to -

EIFFEL
What the friggin' **hell** do you mean that's not Captain Lovelace?

KEPLER
Like I said -

EIFFEL
STOP SAYING THAT!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you're freaking -

EIFFEL
YES! I AM! I INVITE YOU TO FREAK OUT WITH ME!

Minkowski SLAPS HIM.

MINKOWSKI
Would you get it together?

EIFFEL
NO!

Minkowski SLAPS HIM AGAIN.

HERA
Wait, what is -

At that moment, LOVELACE COUGHS. RAGGED. HORRIBLE.

HERA (CONT'D)
How is she - *ughhh.*

Halfway through Hera's previous line, the station is VIOLENTLY ROCKED. The WALLS SHAKE, LIGHTS FLICKER.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, what is going on out there?

HERA
There's a class-eleven stellar flare that I'm *trying* to pilot through even though I just woke up and haven't had my coffee, so **turbulence.** What the hell is going on **<u>in here</u>**?

KEPLER
Something very few people have seen, Hera... but which I think *you* will understand. Think of it as a physical reboot, full regenera -

JACOBI
And you *knew*? You *knew* this would happen?

KEPLER
Not exactly.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, you *didn't* know about -

JACOBI
OF COURSE I didn't! How is this even supposed to - ?

HERA
<u>BRACE</u>.

BOOM-CRANK-CRASH-BOOM-BANG-THUMP! Everyone GROANS as the station is ROCKED AGAIN.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, can we stabilize -

HERA
WORKING ON IT, but everything went offline at the start of the flare. This is gonna take some time.

KEPLER
Well, we've got time. This should still take a few minutes.

EIFFEL
WHAT SHOULD TAKE A COUPLE OF MINUTES?! Would you just <u>explain</u> what is happening?

Kepler looks at him, smiles. Knows he's got them.

KEPLER
Well, Officer Eiffel, it's just a simple matter of -

LOVELACE
Medulla!

She's suddenly bolted upright, startlingly awake. She looks around, TWITCH, SHAKY.

EIFFEL
C-Captain? Are you -

LOVELACE
That's what I need. Yes.

MINKOWSKI
M-Medulla?

LOVELACE
Yes. Oblongata if you have it, but if you don't I'll settle for the hypoglossal nucleus. No, wait, that's not right...

Her mind is going a hundred miles a second and deeply dazed. She scrutinizing faces like she's trying to place a memory.

EIFFEL
It's... it's okay, Captain.

LOVELACE
Is it, Lambert? No, wait, not Lambert. You're the other one, the funny one, well, not the funny one, the one that *thinks* he's funny -
(snaps her fingers)
- yes, you're my *friend*:

EIFFEL
That's right. It's me -

LOVELACE
- Conan the Destroyer.
(no wait:)
Conan the Talk Show Host.
(no, no, wait:)
Conan the Mid-Level Wall Street Broker! Oh, that's not right, is it? Well, it's not not right. Well, it's not not *not* right, and that's what counts.

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, what is - ?

HERA
(gets it)
Her mind is rebooting, Commander. She's reintegrating every memory she has.

MINKOWSKI
Does this happen to *you* when you reboot?

HERA
Every. Single. Time.

LOVELACE
Clippy! You're still here! You know, I worried for a moment. Or maybe it was an eon.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Probably somewhere between a moment and an eon.

JACOBI
What is she even - ?

LOVELACE
Oh, Huey! You're here too!
(re: Minkowski)
And Dewey! And of course who could forget the last member of the trio -
(at Kepler)
Chernabog from Bald Mountain.

KEPLER
Good to see you, Captain.

LOVELACE
Good to see you, too, good to see you, and also... also a little bit not. Yes, no, no, no, no, well *maybe*, but also <u>no</u>, you did a thing, a bad thing, a <u>rude</u> thing! <u>You were rude</u>!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, let's maybe... get away from the rude man.

LOVELACE
N-No, stop! I need to - to find the right wavelength, this is all very *Caveat Emptor* -

MINKOWSKI
Of... of course it is.

LOVELACE
No, that's not a good thing! We have to get back!
(suddenly breathless)
To the... place, with all of the... bendy, and figure out who invented the... the swirling and the... vasomotor sensor...

And with one last SHAKY BREATH, LOVELACE PASSES OUT.

EIFFEL
Whoa!

MINKOWSKI
Easy, Eiffel. I got her.

EIFFEL
Is she - ?

MINKOWSKI
Out, but fine. At least I *think* she's fine.

KEPLER
Getting there. We need to talk.

MINKOWSKI
No, we need to get her to a bed, make sure she's stable. *Then* I'll deal with you. Eiffel, help me.

And as Eiffel rushes forward to help Minkowski, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMON ROOM - 20 MINUTES LATER

Jacobi and Kepler, with Eiffel standing guard over them. A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES as Minkowski enters, SIGHING.

EIFFEL
Commander, how's she doing?

MINKOWSKI
She's... asleep, I think. Muttering to herself, but she's settling. Hera? Give me some good news.

HERA
I... *think* I've managed to get us on a course that'll compensate for the turbulence. At least for now.

MINKOWSKI
Good job, thank you.
(at Kepler)
You. Explain.

Kepler TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

KEPLER
I think by now you've all realized that the person you've known as Captain Isabel Lovelace isn't really that person. Or human.

JACOBI
Which... you've always known.

KEPLER
Which I've always known. She is a very convincing duplicate of Isabel Lovelace, sent here by the presence you established contact with.

EIFFEL
This is... so you've been lying to us, and *she's* been lying to us?

KEPLER
Possible, but unlikely. When I say a "duplicate" Eiffel, all evidence suggests that includes mental infrastructure. I don't think she knows. I think she's under the impression that she <u>is</u> the real Isabel Lovelace.

EIFFEL
How in the name of God could you *possibly* - ?

MINKOWSKI
Because this isn't the first time you've seen this happen, is it?

Kepler grins: *top of the class*.

KEPLER
No. Not me personally, but Goddard has. Long time ago. But right now, we've got other problems.

EIFFEL
Like what?

KEPLER
Like look out the window, Officer Eiffel. Hera?

HERA
As much as I hate to say it... he's right. The stellar flares, the storm, it's all *intensifying*.

KEPLER
How're those psi wave emissions doing?

HERA
On the rise. Steadily.

KEPLER
Yeah. That back there wasn't the contact event. That was the *warm up act*, and if you want to get through it, you're gonna take these handcuffs off right now.

MINKOWSKI
You're hilarious.

KEPLER
I'm *right*. Look: the plan was for all of you never to find out about this aspect of the mission -

EIFFEL
The plan was for us to be dead.

KEPLER
That's kinda what I mean.

EIFFEL
What about Jacobi?

JACOBI
Yeah, was I supposed to find - ?

KEPLER
The point is: you're here now. Welcome to the big leagues, where everything is really, really scary. But - good news! - it's still possible for everyone in this room to make it through in one piece. *If* you start listening to me - the only person with even the barest notion of what is happening - **right the hell now**.

The STATION RUMBLES OMINOUSLY.

HERA
What about Captain Lovelace?

KEPLER
That's not imp -

HERA
I'll be the judge of that. What are you going to do to her?

KEPLER
You wouldn't under -

HERA
I am the smartest four year old in the universe and I'm *very* cranky because of all the people who are dead because of you. Answer the question.

BEAT.

KEPLER
You have to understand: that's not Captain Lovelace.

EIFFEL
Who your bosses also k-

KEPLER
That's a weapon. Designed to appeal to your sense of humanity. A weapon you'll like, because it likes you. And it's about to go off. I'm going to disarm it before it does.

JACOBI
She's a highly trained military ass-kicker *who can put herself back together*. How are you going to - ?

KEPLER
(shut up)
I'm going to get very creative, that's how. This isn't going to be pleasant, but you need to understand that it has to be done.

A BEAT as Eiffel and Minkowski absorb that. But then -

HERA
Colonel... I understand perfectly.

MINKOWSKI
Hera -

HERA
Let me finish, Commander. I understand what you're saying, and now I want you to understand me:
(slowly, emphatically)
You are never touching that woman ever again.

KEPLER
What?

HERA
Oh, you heard. I know where this train goes, I've been on it before. "She'll hurt someone. She can't be trusted. It's okay - *she isn't even human*." No.

This registers with Eiffel and Minkowski.

HERA (CONT'D)
I'll be damned if I let that happen to someone else. And if that's the price of survival, then, speaking as the ship, we're going down.

KEPLER
Well, that's *very nice*, but you're not going to stop this by your -

MINKOWSKI
She's not by herself. If you want to get Captain Lovelace -

EIFFEL
- you'll do it over our dead bodies. Agreed, Commander.

They stand together, resolute. Come at them, bro.

KEPLER
Is this a joke? You don't know what you're doing, and you have no idea what she is.

MINKOWSKI
We know exactly **who** she is. She's one of us.

KEPLER
You're not listening to -

MINKOWSKI
We have listened to you. And now: **Sit. The Hell. Down.** And shut up.

There's a LONG BEAT in which he stares at them and then -

He EXHALES. Angry. Unbelieving. But defeated.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Good choice.

HERA
Thank you. Both of you.

MINKOWSKI
No, thank *you*, Hera. Again.

EIFFEL
Not that that wasn't a great moment, but are we moving in the direction of a plan? One that isn't whatever Colonel Stryker was about to pull out of his Weapon X Files?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, it's called, "Get clear and hope for the best." Hera, work on getting the engines to full blast. I know we just took a beating, but do what you can.

HERA
Yes, sir.

MINKOWSKI
I'm gonna see if I can find us a vector that'll minimize damage. Jacobi, I need a second pair of expert eyes.

JACOBI
What could possibly motivate me t-
(a GUN is COCKED)
Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Consider yourself motivated.

EIFFEL
What about the comms department?

MINKOWSKI
Comms department is on trash duty.
(re: Kepler)
Get this piece of crap out of my sight.

EIFFEL
Aye-aye, sir.

And as everyone begins to move off, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 15 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski looks into a screen, fiddling with the controls.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, Hera, what are we looking at?

HERA
Well, the first red part is the... rapidly expanding area of deadly gravitational forces.

MINKOWSKI
Right...

HERA
While the... dark orange part, is the area that's about to get bombarded with radiation I can't guarantee we're shielded against.

MINKOWSKI
Okay...

HERA
But... the blue part is, I think, viable territory.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... what blue part?

HERA
Oh. Zoom in.

Minkowski HITS A BUTTON. The image gets bigger.

HERA (CONT'D)
Again.
(button)
Again.
(button)
Again.

MINKOWSKI
I... see. Well, that's...
(BEAT)
Jacobi? Any thoughts?

No answer. She turns around to look at Jacobi.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I said...
(spots him)
Jacobi? Your hands are shaking.

JACOBI
Yeah. Look at them go.

MINKOWSKI
You okay?

JACOBI
Nah. I... One of my friends just died. And I killed someone. And discovered that the man who has been running my life for years, has been lying to me. And the only thing I feel right now?
(BEAT)
Relief.

MINKOWSKI
Re - what?

JACOBI
Yeah. Pretty screwed up, huh?
(BEAT)
You weren't there. You didn't hear him. Outside. Begging. So sure that... And ever since then there's just been this voice in my head whispering, "How can you be sure? Maybe you're just a really good clone that thinks it's Daniel Jacobi."

MINKOWSKI
But now...

JACOBI
We're getting showered by psi waves, and I'm not having a fit. Figured it would have started by now. If it was going to. So I guess I'm... I'm...

He takes a DEEP BREATH, trying to collect himself.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Oh, I was *scared*. I hadn't even realized how scared I was. Every single second since it happened. I was scared. That's new.

He LAUGHS. It's thin, hollow. Minkowski watches, conflicted.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
All right, I'm... I'm fine. Fine.

MINKOWSKI
Good.

JACOBI
Sorry about -

MINKOWSKI
It's fine.

JACOBI
Don't think this means I don't, you know, hate you all.

MINKOWSKI
Wouldn't have it any other way.

JACOBI
All right, lets take a look at those star charts.

Minkowski PRESSES A BUTTON. There's a BEAT as he studies them, taking in what's on the screen.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Wow. We are so dead.

MINKOWSKI
I know.

JACOBI
Right... Let's see what I can do.

And as he starts to PRESS BUTTONS, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDORS - MEANWHILE

A DOOR OPENS. Eiffel steps through, leading a grumpy Kepler.

EIFFEL
C'mon. Move.

KEPLER
You're making a mistake.

EIFFEL
That's nice.

KEPLER
You know -

At that moment, the STATION SHAKES. BADLY. Eiffel and Kepler both pause, look around them, alarmed, as LIGHTS FLICKER.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
- it's not too late to change your mind. Gotta start thinking about -

EIFFEL
If you start talking about "The Big Picture" I will kill you. I have a gun.

KEPLER
Someone's gotta think about it. Someone's gotta think about the people who aren't on this station.

EIFFEL
I'll take that under advisement. *Let's go*.

KEPLER
You know, Eiffel, you don't know what working at Goddard Futuristics is *really* like.

EIFFEL
(deadpan)
You have a cool dental plan. *Hooray*.

KEPLER
Nah, it's not about that. It's about going to new places, meeting interesting people...

Eiffel is doing his best to ignore Kepler.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You know... world leaders, big scientists... little kids...

Eiffel stops. Blinks.

EIFFEL
Wait. What?

KEPLER
Hell, just before I came up here, Mr. Cutter introduced me to the *cutest* little girl. Now what was her name? Allison? Angela?
(snaps his fingers)
Anne.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
That's what it was, I remember now. Anne.
(smiles)
See, this is what I'm talking about. It'd be a real *shame* if something made that little girl sad, no? Or if something happened <u>to</u> that little -

KA-POW! Eiffel's just socked Kepler on the jaw.

EIFFEL
(vicious)
Shut up!

And as the second blow lands, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - MEANWHILE

Lovelace, in her bed. Tossing and turning. Restless. Mumbling to herself, unintelligibly, in her sleep.

HERA
Captain? Captain, can you hear me?

For another BEAT, Lovelace mutters in her sleep.

HERA (CONT'D)
All right, it... it sounds like you still need a moment.
(BEAT)
Listen. I know we haven't... we're not close. But... I think I get what you're going through. The others... haven't had a hole in their head. I know how painful this is. How disorienting.
(BEAT)
I *so* want to tell you to take your time. To know that if you're not all right you're not all right, and *that's fine*.
(BEAT)
But that's not how this works. Because right now, the people we care about are in over their heads. So you are going to come help us save the day. Again. <u>Get. Up.</u>

Was that a sound? Before we can hear properly, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 10 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski and Jacobi, still at the controls.

JACOBI
Okay, you see what I'm going for?

MINKOWSKI
That might work, but -

BOOM! The DOOR JUST FLEW OPEN, startling both of them.

KEPLER
Easy. Nobody do anything stupid.

Eiffel and Kepler. The latter still handcuffed... but now pointing Eiffel's gun to Eiffel's head.

EIFFEL
Commander -

MINKOWSKI
(drawing)
Oh for - how did - ?

KEPLER
No sudden moves, Lieutenant. Or I'm blowing Eiffel's head off.

EIFFEL
Just shoot him, Minkowski! This is my own damn fault.

KEPLER
Quiet, Eiffel.

MINKOWSKI
What do you want?

KEPLER
Start with getting these handcuffs off. Throw the keys to Eiffel.

Minkowski GROWLS, frustrated. But...

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. Catch.

She throws, Eiffel snatches them out of the air.

KEPLER
Good arm. Eiffel, get these handcuffs off me. *Gently*.

Eiffel does as he's told. A CLICK as the handcuffs unlock.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Better.

EIFFEL
Commander, I'm so sorry -

HERA
Don't worry, Eiffel. Everything's gonna be okay.

KEPLER
All right, next! Lieutenant, you'll be putting that gun away now. Time to stand down.

MINKOWSKI
Not gonna happen.

KEPLER
Really? How many more stupid decisions you gotta make? Because right now, you're -

He blinks. It's suddenly become clear that no one is looking at him anymore. They're all staring *past him*.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Umm? Hello? Are you listening?

MINKOWSKI
(so distracted)
Uh, yeah. Sure.

KEPLER
What are you staring at? Is there something behind -

He finally glances over his shoulder.

LOVELACE
Hi honey. I'm home.

WHAM! Category Five PUNCH, straight to the jaw. Kepler CRIES OUT, GOES DOWN, releasing Eiffel. The communications officer quickly scurries away.

KEPLER
Why you -

LOVELACE
Oh no you don't.

SMACK! WHAM! CRACK! She lets loose on him, vicious. In a flash she's got his gun.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I'll be taking this. I think you're done playing with guns. You okay, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Y-yeah. Thanks.

LOVELACE
Good. I think it's time the Colonel and I have a little chat.

He looks up at her. Expectant. Maybe even a little fearful?

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So... how have you been since the last time we hung out? I've been *great*. I went to this really... kinda nothing place, then hallucinated a <u>whole bunch</u>, and now I get up to find everything falling apart. Did you miss me?

EIFFEL
Uh... Captain? Y-you do... realize that - ?

LOVELACE
Yeah, Eiffel. Somewhere in the vision quest I figured it out. And, in case you were wondering, *I didn't know about any of this before*, <u>RIGHT</u>?

She's twisting Kepler's wrist. He WINCES in pain.

KEPLER
R-right.

LOVELACE
Good boy.

She smiles, releases his wrist. He GASPS, relieved.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What you did to me was *monstrous*.

She CLICKS the hammer on the gun.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I could kill you. Maybe I *should* kill you. Hell, I've been thinking about very little *other* than killing you for the last hundred days.

She smiles at him, wolfish. ... then she HOLSTERS the gun.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
But I'm not going to. Upside of the whole... violent-death-identity-disassociation thing? There's time to think.
(BEAT)
Two days ago? Click, click, boom. But... I realized something. The whole epic rampage of revenge thing? Isabel Lovelace wouldn't do that. The terrible wretch that you people made Isabel Lovelace into? Oh, she'd do that. But... I'm not going to be that person anymore.
(BEAT)
I'm going to be Isabel Lovelace again. Even if I never have before. Although...

She KICKS Kepler, who WINCES in pain. Lovelace LAUGHS.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay, *now* I'm going to be Isabel Lovelace.

MINKOWSKI
Good to have you back, Captain.

LOVELACE
Good to be back. Let's get these two back to their cells before -

KA-BOOM! The station is ROCKED VIOLENTLY. ALARMS GO OFF as the TURBULENCE INCREASES.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Oh for God's - *can't we ever get a break?!*

EIFFEL
Not on this station...

JACOBI
Hera! Propulsion!

HERA
IT'S ALREADY ONLINE!

MINKOWSKI
Divert all power to the engine.

LOVELACE
What do we know about this event?

MINKOWSKI
Next to nothing. It's causing fluctuations in the gravity fields, and massive radiation outputs.

There's a SLIGHT HUM in the background...

LOVELACE
Fine, get me the readouts for -
(off their looks:)
... what? Why are you all looking at me like that?

EIFFEL
Uh... Captain?

MINKOWSKI
Your... your hands are glowing.

Lovelace looks down, puzzled.

LOVELACE
(oh, that's not good)
Huh. So they are.

The HUMMING is getting LOUDER -

JACOBI
Umm, your eyes are starting to -

LOVELACE
What is - ?

The HUM REACHES its PEAK as LOVELACE BEGINS TO GLOW - so BRIGHT all the other characters have to shield their eyes.

And then suddenly - everything STOPS. The HUM, the TURBULENCE, everything. It is... tranquil.

HERA
Cap - captain? Is that you?

Well, it is and it isn't. It's definitely still Lovelace, but she looks like never before. Her SKIN GLOWS, sapphire blue. She hangs in mid-air, her expression blank.

And her eyes - her eyes BURN, as if they were on of fire.

Around her we hear a bizarre - yet oddly comforting - soundscape. Hints of wind... fire... ghostly voices...

EIFFEL
Ho - holy...

LOVELACE
NOW... WE ARE GOING TO SPEAK.

It's her voice, but AMPLIFIED. It BOOMS, it ECHOES, it sounds like half a dozen of her all speaking simultaneously.

EIFFEL
S-speak?

Kepler steps forward.

KEPLER
Yes, Eiffel. Welcome to the Contact Event.

Well then. Holy crap.

HERA
But - how is - what is - ?

MINKOWSKI
What - what Hera said.

KEPLER
I take it that I now speak not *to* Isabel Lovelace, but *through* her?

LOVELACE
THAT IS CORRECTAMUNDO.

Kepler blinks: *okay...*

KEPLER
Very good. My name is Colonel -

LOVELACE
WE KNOW.

KEPLER
How do you - ?

LOVELACE
WE CAUGHT THE RERUNS.

Kepler turns to Minkowski.

KEPLER
Why is she speaking like -

MINKOWSKI
Because they learned English from Professor Magoo over there.

KEPLER
(back to Lovelace)
We have been waiting for this moment. I am here to negotiate the -

LOVELACE
NO.

KEPLER
(chuckles)
Listen to me. I am -

LOVELACE
UNIMPORTANT.

KEPLER
Let me finish. I am the commanding officer of this station. You *will* talk <u>to me</u>.

Lovelace's eyes seem to FOCUS on Kepler.

LOVELACE
NO. YOU ARE A VIOLENT TROLL, AND WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR WAMAJAMA. WE HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU.

KEPLER
I am the only one <u>qualified</u> to -

LOVELACE
WE ARE DONE WITH YOU.

KEPLER
But I am not done with you! You <u>will</u> deal with me or -

LOVELACE
ENOUGH.

Oh boy. That's the first emotion displayed since the presence's entrance, and she - they - sound <u>angry</u>. Lovelace's voice BOOMS at a LOWER PITCH.

She raises a hand in his direction, SNAPS HER FINGERS. Immediately, KEPLER TENSES. Immobile.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
YOU THINK THAT VIOLENCE GIVES YOU AUTHORITY?

KEPLER
(breathless)
I – I – *can't move* –

LOVELACE
THAT YOU CAN TAKE UP AIR TIME JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE YOURSELF A WEAPON?

MINKOWSKI
What is – ?

LOVELACE
WE ARE NOT LIKE YOU. WE ARE ONGOING, WORK IN PROGRESS. YOU ARE UNABLE HURT US. YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO HURT ANYONE.

Lovelace's eyes fall on Kepler's right hand.

KEPLER
Wait – <u>what are you doing</u>?

LOVELACE
DISARMING YOU.

Her FINGERS SNAP. FLAMES ERRUPT. KEPLER SCREAMS.

And then – the flames stop. The screams stop, replaced by KEPLER HYPERVENTILATING. Everyone stares, in shocked horror.

MINKOWSKI
Oh my God, his... hand. It's... it's gone.

LOVELACE
THERE. <u>NOW WE ARE DONE WITH YOU</u>.

She SNAPS HER FINGERS AGAIN, and Kepler FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM. He COLLIDES AGAINST the WALL with a GRUNT.

HERA
What – what do you want? How can –

LOVELACE
WHERE IS THE ONE WE KNOW? THE SPEAKER. WHERE IS DOUGLAS?

There's a BEAT as everyone looks around. Errr...

JACOBI
I, uh, think he's hiding underneath that console.

LOVELACE
THANK YOU.

Lovelace SNAPS HER FINGERS. There's a HORRIBLE METALLIC CRUNCHING SOUND as the console is torn apart.

EIFFEL
Ahhh! I mean - uh -

LOVELACE
THERE YOU ARE.

EIFFEL
Yes! And, uh -

LOVELACE
CLOSER.

EIFFEL
Actually I'm fine right -

LOVELACE
CLOSER.

She SNAPS HER FINGERS. HE FLIES TOWARDS HER, STOPPING ABOUT A FOOT IN FRONT OF HER FACE.

EIFFEL
AAAahh. Okay, sure. Closer is good.

LOVELACE
WE HAVE BEEN WAITING.

EIFFEL
Ummm? Sorry? Waiting for - ?

LOVELACE
YOU. FOR YOU TO COMMUNICATE. FOR YOU TO GET TOGETHER AND FEEL ALL RIGHT.

EIFFEL
Sure! Any chance we could clarify what that might -

LOVELACE
YOU HAVE STARTED, YOU ARE ONGOING. YOU CANNOT SQUELCH OFF NOW.

MINKOWSKI
You *really* couldn't have - ?

EIFFEL
(hissed whisper)
NOT THE TIME!

LOVELACE
GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER. FINISH THE PROCESS. QUICKLY.

EIFFEL
Uh, process? Like the due sort -

LOVELACE
WORK IT OUT, BRAINIAC. AND SOON. THE DOOR WON'T STAY OPEN FOREVER. WE ARE WAITING.

And with that: WOOSH! Everything SETTLES BACK TO NORMAL. All the spooky, alien environmentals go away in a SUDDEN BURST OF AIR. There's a FLASH, and Lovelace looks normal again.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay. That was... weird.

In a corner, Kepler WHIMPERS in pain.

HERA
In, umm, less terrifying news... the stellar flare seems to have completely subsided. It... it looks like it's finally over.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - 4 HOURS LATER

Lovelace, alone in her quarters.

LOVELACE
You gonna knock? Or just stand outside awkwardly?

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN and Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
I was kinda leaning in the awkward standing direction.

LOVELACE
What can I do for you, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Wanted to update you. Kepler and Jacobi are back in their cell. Kepler is... shook up, but stable.

LOVELACE
That's good, I suppose. What else?
(BEAT)
C'mon, you've got your face on.

MINKOWSKI
What face?

LOVELACE
Your, "I don't want to have this tricky conversation but someone has to be the grown-up for Chrissake," face. Is this where you suggest that maybe I should also be in lockdown? Just until we're sure the aliens aren't about to make possession a regular thing?

MINKOWSKI
Not exactly.
(DEEP BREATH)
I want you to take over the Hephaestus.

LOVELACE
Excuse me? How is that a good idea? With the whole... alienness thing?

MINKOWSKI
I trust you. And after... what I did, I don't trust myself. I shouldn't be in charge right now.

LOVELACE
Minkowski, I was the person pushing for the whole indiscriminate murder thing, remember?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, but...I disagreed with you, but you were in control. I... I did what I did because I lost control. And until I get it back, I don't my hands are the best ones for this crew to be in.

LOVELACE
I think that's bull.

MINKOWSKI
It's not. I'm dealing with it, but... I shouldn't be doing that *and* in charge.

There's a BEAT as Lovelace looks at her. Then she GROANS.

LOVELACE
On the very clear understanding that this is a temporary situation, and that you are going to sort yourself out and kick me out of your chair ASAP... Fine. You're on.

They shake hands.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Captain.

LOVELACE
Yeah. You're welcome.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - 30 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel at the console, staring out the window. He SIGHS DEEPLY. Behind him, a DOOR OPENS as Minkowski enters.

EIFFEL
Hey Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Lieutenant, Eiffel. Just Lieutenant. Lovelace has just assumed control of the station.

HERA
Are you okay, Lieutenant?

MINKOWSKI
No, not really. You, Hera?

HERA
Mm-mm. Nope.

Minkowski smiles softly. *What a day*.

MINKOWSKI
What about you, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
You mean, "Are you wigging out over your *really* close encounter of the third kind?" I'm *fine*, Comman - do I have to call you "Lieutenant?"

MINKOWSKI
Not if you don't want.

EIFFEL
Okay - *good*.

HERA
Any idea what the... the aliens' message was about?

EIFFEL
No. I may have given Marvin and the Martian Chronicles the words, but that mojo was one Roswell Conspiracy above my grokking level.

MINKOWSKI
(pointed whisper)
This is why we get into trouble.

EIFFEL
Commander, we have to get back to Earth.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we don't know that what Kepler said is true.

HERA
Why wouldn't it be?

EIFFEL
Now that we're ground zero for the new and improved Invasion of the Body Snatchers? You bet they're gonna be looking for leverage.

MINKOWSKI
One thing at a time, okay? We'll see how much damage we just took on, and then... we'll see what we can do.

They sit in silence for a BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL
Well, I suppose at least things can't get any w -

MINKOWSKI
DON'T SAY IT!

HERA
DON'T SAY IT!

Eiffel covers his mouth.

EIFFEL
Ack! Sorry! Maybe nobody heard?

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Four people gathered around a large piece of paper. One of them DRAWS ON IT with FURIOUS CONCENTRATION.

KLEIN
A, uh... melon.

BIRKHOFF
Self-worth? Togetherness?

KLEIN
Like a... really, really big melon.

BIRKHOFF
Unity? Fusion? Um, century?

KLEIN
Just like an... <u>enormous</u> melon?

BERNOULI
Aaaaaand... Time.

Officer Jordan puts down her pencil. <u>Fuming</u>.

JORDAN
Really, Klein? A <u>melon</u>? **<u>A MELON</u>**?

KLEIN
What was it?

JORDAN
No, hang on, there's still other combinations of, "melon," and, "bigness," you haven't tried. What if it's a <u>gigantic</u> melon?

BIRKHOFF
Captain?

BERNOULI
The word was flotsam. Flotsam.

KLEIN
What.

BIRKHOFF
Oh, come on. Jordan...

JORDAN
Nooo, do not blame the artist. The artist is without blame.

BIRKHOFF
Jordan, can you even define the word, "flotsam?"

JORDAN
OF COURSE I CAN DEFINE FLOTSAM!
(BEAT, lower:)
No, I can't. Help please.

There's a BEEP from a computer. There's a GROAN from everyone, immediately followed by a SCRAMBLE.

BERNOULI
Klein, you were last.

KLEIN
No, I -

BERNOULI
Officer Klein, are you about to dispute my official ruling in the sacred tradition of, "Nose Goes?"?

KLEIN
No, Captain Bernouli.

BERNOULI
Good boy. Get.

As Klein moves off -

BIRKHOFF
All right, lets see. That brings Officer Jordan's score up to... Oooh, tricky math here: nothing, and nothing, divided by nothing...

JORDAN
It's not my fault you people can't appreciate a true *artiste*.

BERNOULI
You do have a rather... dadaist approach to Pictionary, Jordan.

KLEIN
Uh... Captain? I need you to come look at this, sir. And actually, you too, Doctor Birkhoff.

Frowning, Bernouli and Birkhoff join Klein at the console.

BERNOULI
Whoa.

BIRKHOFF
That's... different.

They start looking at different screens.

BERNOULI
What are we looking at here? Psi wave radiation, flare... that's what, a class nine?

BIRKHOFF
At those wavelengths? No way. Class *thirteen*.

BERNOULI
Klein, what's the origin point?

KLEIN
Triangulating, but it looks like... Wolf 359. It's gotta be.

BERNOULI
That's Minkowski's crew. What the hell are they playing at?

BIRKHOFF
Sir? Are we doing this?

Bernouli thinks for a moment, then -

BERNOULI
Do it. Full read out. Jordan?

JORDAN
On it, sir. One moment.

Jordan FIRES UP the Pulse Beacon Relay. The machine HUMS as she punches in a few commands. After a moment - DING! She HITS A SWITCH - there's a BURST OF STATIC as the TRANSMITTER ENGAGES - and -

JORDAN (CONT'D)
All right, here we go: This is Communications Officer Jordan, on board the U.S.S. Hermes, transmitting to Canaveral. Come in, Canaveral. Authentication code -

And suddenly there's a LOUD WHIZZING SOUND, and we are in -

INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - GODDARD FUTURISTIC HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1300 HOURS

There's a sound of a PRINTER running off a document. After a moment, it's placed on a desk.

RACHEL
When did this come in? How many people have seen this?
(INDISTINCT REPLY)
Good. Expunge the records. No one sees this, it goes in the black.

She rises from her desk, and we follow her FOOTSTEPS all the way to a DOOR. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK and we go into -

INT. MR. CUTTER'S OFFICE - GODDARD FUTURISTIC HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - CONTINUOUS

Cutter looks up from his computer.

MR. CUTTER
Rachel, this is a very busy -

RACHEL
I know.

MR. CUTTER
I don't have time for any -

She places the document on his desk. His eyes scan it. BEAT.

RACHEL
Mmm-hmm. "Thank you, Rachel. You're welcome, Mr. Cutter." It's already off the record. A.P.O.

MR. CUTTER
Good. Clear the rest of my day.

RACHEL
Of course. Say, "Hi," for me.

We hear a BUTTON being pressed, the sound of an ELEVATOR DESCENDING, and finally the DING! of it arriving at -

INT. BLACK ARCHIVES - CONTINUOUS

The ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN, and Cutter strides out.

MR. CUTTER
Knock, knock.

PRYCE
Marcus. What are you doing down here? I -

Cutter holds up the document in front of her face.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
What is this?

MR. CUTTER
Read.

Pryce begins to scan the top page.

PRYCE
(intrigued)
Oh.
(gets it)
Oh.

MR. CUTTER
Mm-hmm. It's started. We're *finally* in business.

Pryce looks up from the document. Locks eyes with Cutter.

PRYCE
Well then... it looks like we have some traveling to do.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE 47.

STOP RECORDING.

WOLF 359

"THETA SCENARIO"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1089 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 48.

BEGIN RECORDING:

It begins slow, distant... First WOODWINDS. Then a HARP. Finally... BRASS. Dulled and distant, with patches of INTERFERENCE.

It's quickly apparent that we are listening to a recording. And then, just as the music is reaching a crescendo:

VOICE
Good evening, everybody.

It's a new voice, a woman. Someone we haven't met before.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Tonight's program is the *Waltz of the Flowers*, from Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. Please enjoy the musical accompaniment over our briefing.

We hear her CRACK HER KNUCKLES, and OPEN A FILE.

VOICE (CONT'D)
First things first. Procyon is still flaring for the next thirty-six hours. That means protocol C *for the duration*. If you haven't already spoken to Dr. Gillan about the precautions that are in effect, you should do so *immediately*.

Secondly, just because I know that rumors have already started flying - *yes*, Doctor Smith and Officer Tate *were* caught outside during the initial flare. We have a malfunctioning airlock hatch to thank for that. Fortunately, Lieutenant Oswin was able to stage a successful S and R operation. All three are back on board the ship, although they are going to remain under observation in the medical wing for the next few days.

She SHUTS the FILE.

VOICE (CONT'D)
That is all for now. Stay alert until we get through this storm, and please report it to your superiors. Report it promptly, okay, Grayson? We don't want another Barnard incident...

All right, that is all for tonight. Tomorrow... a selection of Holst, and some Saint-Saenz, so there's something to look forward to. Enjoy the remainder of our musical program.

The MUSIC SWELLS, building, finally reaching a -

CLICK!

That was the switch on the recorder we've been listening to. EVERYTHING STOPS. After a SILENT BEAT -

KEPLER
Ladies and gentlemen...

And it suddenly becomes clear that we are in -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 2100 HOURS

Everyone gathered together. Kepler stands next to one of the consoles, manning the controls with his remaining good hand. Eiffel, Minkowski, and Lovelace stand on the side. Jacobi hovers towards the back, handcuffed to one of the walls.

KEPLER
... allow me to introduce Elizabeth Zhang, Commander of the U.S.S. Tiamat.

EIFFEL
The Tia-what?

KEPLER
Tiamat. The ninth deep space exploration mission launched by the Wright-Goddard Aeronautics Company.

EIFFEL
And let me guess: didn't go well?

HERA
Official company records say that the Tiamat disappeared after 392 days of travel. It was never found.

KEPLER
That's the *official* story.

LOVELACE
And off the record?

KEPLER
It took some doing, but a salvage team was able to recover the *partial* remains of the Tiamat from the orbit around Procyon.

EIFFEL
Ugh, tell me this isn't *another* tragic story of you people sending someone really nice to die really, really far from away from home?

KEPLER
What this is, Officer Eiffel, is the best source of intel we have. This is *First Contact*.

HERA
Wait a minute - the Tiamat disappeared in 1978. You've known about alien life for *decades*? Why don't more people know about this?

KEPLER
All in good time. The Tiamat's second mission, the one in which it disappeared, remains one of the most remote we've ever done. Records suggest that -

EIFFEL
Who. Cares.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
No - <u>really</u>. Why are we wasting our time with this stuff?

MINKOWSKI
(we've been over this)
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Shouldn't we be -

LOVELACE
It's intel, Eiffel. Never a bad thing to have. Don't you want to know why -

EIFFEL
No, I've fallen for that trap before. *That's* how they get you. "Oooh, don't you want to know? Pull up a chair, lets listen to these old records! Lets get really invested!" And before you know it's been **another** year and you're *still here*. In this *pit*. With all these snakes. In the snake-filled pit with all the explosions and then -

LOVELACE
OKAY! I think we got the metaphor.

JACOBI
Jeez, what's up with you people?

MINKOWSKI
Quiet.

JACOBI
Is there a reason you're even more friggin' tense than usual?

LOVELACE
Not that it's any of your business, but we did the -

EIFFEL
Well don't tell him!

LOVELACE
Oh, what's he gonna do? Hate us in a <u>more</u> absolute away from his cell?
(back to Jacobi)
We did the damage assessment on the ship and the station. And there's a problem.

HERA
Starboard engine's not turning on. Its coil compressor broke in the turbulence.

MINKOWSKI
Main engine's compensating, but it can only do so much. We're losing ground. In about sixteen days we're gonna be past the red line.

JACOBI
And what, you don't have another compressor?

HERA
We have *exactly* one working coil compressor left. It just happens...

LOVELACE
... to be one of the pieces we need to fix the Urania's engine. There's the dilemma.

MINKOWSKI
We can keep the Hephaestus in orbit *or* get the Urania space-worthy.

EIFFEL
And in what crazy parallel dimensions is that a dilemma?

LOVELACE
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
We're getting the Urania fixed and getting out of here, right *Captain*?

This is clearly a point of tension.

LOVELACE
It's not that easy. Whatever we decide, we're giving up one of the crafts. I'm not making that call for everyone. We're voting, and we're not doing anything until we have a <u>unanimous</u> decision.

EIFFEL
Fine, lets v-

LOVELACE
No. We're not gonna make an informed decision until we know as much as we can about what the hell has been going on here.

EIFFEL
Why?

LOVELACE
Because I'm the Captain, *that's* why. That call I *will* make.
(BEAT)
Kepler, how does your story end?

KEPLER
Kaboom ever after.

That gets their attention. Everyone's heads turn back towards Kepler.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
They found enough of the central computer to confirm that the Tiamat been set to self-destruct. Full command authorization.

MINKOWSKI
The Commander did it? Why?

KEPLER
So glad you asked. Shall we?

CLICK! The RECORDER ENGAGES and a new RECORDING BEGINS with a BURST OF STATIC:

ZHANG
Umm, this is -
(clears throat)
This is an emergency transmission from the U.S.S. Tiamat to Mission Command. Commander Elizabeth Zhang transmitting.

She sounds very hesitant. Halting.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
This... this message should be forwarded to Mission Director Richardson, and to Communications Director Keller.

Sirs I - I hope you're doing well. I... I know what I am about to say is going to sound... strange. But, I have... verified the facts with my crew, and... well, if this is some form of delusion, it is affecting *everyone on the ship*.
(deep breath)
(MORE)

ZHANG (CONT'D)
There is, uh, no easy way to say this, so... all right. In my previous report I mentioned that Doctor Smith, Lieutenant Oswin, and Officer Tate were all quarantined due to exposure to radiation. Today, at approximately 2300 hours, I found all three of them in the ship's bridge. They claimed to have no memories of the quarantine order. But...

This is difficult for her. She SWALLOWS hard.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
When I returned to the medical facility, I found... I found Tate, Smith, and Oswin *already* inside the facility. There... there appear to be two of each person present.

There has been a lot of, umm, *confusion* on the matter. We are evaluating all six men - Doctor Gillan is performing a medical examination, and Doctor Clarke is performing a full psych eval. She says that as far as she can tell, each... version of each person has the exact same memories. They all think they're the original. And she doesn't think they're lying.

I - um, for the time being, we are containing all of the... *subjects,* I suppose, but... we're going to need the manpower sooner or later. Well, sooner, really.
(very hesitant)
Sirs I... I will follow your lead on this, and I don't want to raise any alarms prematurely, but... this might be a Theta Scenario. I... can't think of what else could cause this.
(BEAT)
I await further instructions.

The message ENDS with another BURST of STATIC. Kepler turns off the recorder - CLICK!

KEPLER
None of these transmissions ever reached Canaveral.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
They were all recovered by the salvage team *after* the fact.

MINKOWSKI
What did she just say? What's a *Theta Scenario*?

KEPLER
Code for extraterrestrial contact. Highest ranking member of each crew was briefed on the possibility.

Lovelace and Minkowski exchange a look: *huh?*

LOVELACE
Uhh, I never got that briefing.

MINKOWSKI
Neither did I...

KEPLER
Well, no. Both of your crews had Hilbert on them.

LOVELACE
I outranked Hilbert. We both did.

KEPLER
Well... *officially*.

Lovelace and Minkowski exchange another - *indignant* - look.

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

EIFFEL
Yes, what a great thing to focus on! All right, so Us Oh-Point-Oh were also getting their crew members xeroxed.

LOVELACE
Are you *actively trying* to be as insensitive as you can?

EIFFEL
I'm trying to move this along.

HERA
It's not quite the same, though. There's more than one duplicate.

MINKOWSKI
And it sounds like those just turned up inside the station. You had your shuttle, Captain. What accounts for the differences?

KEPLER
(shrug)
May be as simple as different stars, different behaviors. We don't know.

JACOBI
But you have a theory, don't you?
(BEAT)
There's *always* a theory. There's always that special way you put two and two together. C'mon. Show us how *smart* you are.

Kepler's eyes narrow. He didn't actually want to, but...

KEPLER
There *is* a... call it an educated guess.

JACOBI
Shocker.

KEPLER
We think it might have something to do with exposure to unusual stellar activity.

JACOBI
What does that even - ? Okay, so what? Like if we were around for a - Oh. Goddamit...

EIFFEL
What? What just happened?

KEPLER
Like if you were outside when a flare hit, for example.

JACOBI
Which I was.

MINKOWSKI
And which... *you* were, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
What? No I was n - oh god, you're right, I *totally* was.

KEPLER
We think they utilize the flares as an information-gathering tool. Think high power scanner.

EIFFEL
Oh, for God's - you're telling me all this started because I went outside to play while the weather was bad?!

KEPLER
That's *a theory*.

LOVELACE
I was never outside during a flare.

HERA
No, but your shuttle was consumed by the star. That may be even <u>more</u> effective in terms of gathering information.

MINKOWSKI
It'd explain why they were also able to put together your shuttle.

LOVELACE
I don't know, that still doesn't make all the sense in the -

EIFFEL
(fed up)
Yeah, *of course* it doesn't.

MINKOWSKI
(sit down)
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
No, c'mon Commander. We've been on this merry-go-round. It only ever *kinda* makes sense, and it gets *sorta* explained, but the recording cuts out right before the good bit.
(BEAT)
I want a vote.

LOVELACE
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
I want a vote. I think we all just want to get the hell out of here. If I'm right, we go fix the Urania's engine. If I'm not, we listen to more of the Twilight Zone Tapes. Cool?

LOVELACE
(rolling her eyes)
Oh, all right. *Fine*.

JACOBI
Uh, do I get a - ?

EIFFEL, MINKOWSKI, LOVELACE, HERA
NO.

EIFFEL
All right, uh... by show of hands, I guess? All in favor of fixing the Urania and getting outta here?

There's a shuffle as some hands rise.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(not pleased)
And... all in favor of staying here?

Hands go down and hands go up.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And... uh... all those without hands?

HERA
(pointed)
I was wondering when you'd get there.

EIFFEL
Sorry? How would you have - ?

HERA
I vote stay.

LOVELACE
That's me and you in favor of leaving, Minkowski and Hera in favor of staying. On we go.

EIFFEL
What are you two even - ?

LOVELACE
Hey! Did you have the votes? No.
(BEAT)
Kepler, play the next tape. Lets keep going.

Kepler hits the recorder - CLICK!

ZHANG
This is an emergency transmission from the U.S.S. Tiamat to Mission Command. Commander Elizabeth Zhang transmitting. Forward message to mission control and communication.

She sounds worn-down. Like she hasn't slept in days.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
We are still awaiting further instructions. If - if you *are* getting this message, we have not received any communications in the last three months.

I made a judgment call. On Owsin, Tate, and Smith. Gillan and Clarke both agreed: both versions of each person were physically identical, and each believed they were the original. Psych parameters were in the green... barely. And we... we needed the manpower. So I put them back to work. All six of them.

She stops for a moment. LAUGHS a small, bitter laugh.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
It was another flare. We knew the first ones were coming but... this one came out of *nowhere*. It overloaded the engines, caused an explosion. Oswin, Tate, and - well, *an* Oswin, and *a* Tate, and *a* Smith were in the engine room. They were caught in the blast, instantly killed.

But... God, I know how this is going to sound.
(BEAT, collects herself:)
The Oswin and the Smith came back. I... I don't have any other way of putting it.
(MORE)

ZHANG (CONT'D)
Eighteen hours after the accident, there was another flare and the bodies just...
(how to explain this?)
... remade themselves. Poor Clarke was there, she saw it all. She can't stop shaking.

Doctor Gillan is examining them now, but... they're back. They're alive again. And... Tate isn't.

She can't go on for a moment. Then -

ZHANG (CONT'D)
Which means we now know who are the originals. And that... the Tate that's still alive... *isn't*. They aren't taking that well. *None* of them are. Clarke is doing her best, but, I know her - she's in no condition to be doing psych work.

She takes a DEEP BREATH.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
There's more. After the explosion, the engines were badly damaged. We have enough propulsion to stay in orbit, but not enough to achieve escape velocity. We're... effectively stranded here. I've started to ration the food, but... we have three -
(catches herself)
- two additional mouths to feed. I'm having the crew finish up their experiments, but it's mostly to give them something to do.

If you are receiving this, please send assistance. Tiamat Actual, out.

A BURST OF STATIC as the transmission ends. Kepler CLICKS OFF THE RECORDER.

MINKOWSKI
Jesus...

KEPLER
Hell of a story, isn't it?

Eiffel raises his hand.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Eiffel? You got a question?

EIFFEL
Yeah... so here's what I don't get:
(turns to Minkowski)
You're voting to stay here?

LOVELACE
Hey!

EIFFEL
What the hell is wrong with you?!?

LOVELACE
HEY! Cool it, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oh, sure, sure, excuse me.
(exaggerated cool)
What, if you will, the hell is wrong with you?

HERA
Cut it out.

EIFFEL
No, really, Minkowski: what's going on in that head of yours?

Minkowski EXHALES.

MINKOWSKI
I'm not saying stay here forever. But... I don't think we can leave with everything up in the air. We have a right to know what's been happening for the last three years.

EIFFEL
Yeah, and *I* have a right to get home before Goddard finishes dissecting my family!

MINKOWSKI
(snapping)
Well how do you think I - ?!

She stops herself, TAKING A DEEP BREATH. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
(say it)
What?

MINKOWSKI
I... I can't, Eiffel. After everything that happened... I don't know how I can go home.
(BEAT)
If we leave now, before we figure all this out, then it's all been for nothing. I... I can't do that.

EIFFEL
So my people have to suffer because *you* can't face yours?

MINKOWSKI
And what *exactly* are you going to do to help when you get home? *Well*?

They both stare at each other for a BEAT, seething. And then they both EXHALE, turning away from the other.

KEPLER
So... any other questions?
(a hand rises)
Jacobi?

JACOBI
So... Cutter, and whatever other big wigs back at Canaveral, they knew about the alien duplicates' ability to regenerate themselves. Was that the whole point of this thing? Is that what we're after here? Some way to apply that ability to humans?

KEPLER
No, although that possibility's done wonders when it comes to getting the budget office to -

EIFFEL
Can we *please* not talk about the budget office? Who cares?

KEPLER
Of all people, Eiffel? <u>You</u> should.

Eiffel blinks: *huh?*

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Remind me, Eiffel... about a year ago, you came down with a *bad* case of respiratory failure, didn't you? How did you get through that?

EIFFEL
Hilbert treated me, and, uh...

LOVELACE
And you got a blood transfusion. From me. That's where he's going.

KEPLER
How do you think you survived that attack? Or the two hundred days you were stranded in space?

EIFFEL
But the Decima started to -

KEPLER
(chuckles)
Don't tell me you actually believed that crap. *Hilbert* needed to believe that was the reason your health was improving. Why do you think I terminated the program? Couldn't have him figuring out what was *really* going on, could I?

EIFFEL
So - I'm sort of -

KEPLER
You really think you did it all by yourself? You think that's just *blood* running through your veins?

Kepler smiles at Eiffel, who can't help but shudder a bit.

MINKOWSKI
(lets change the subject)
All right, so you're not here for the medical benefits. Why *are* you here, then? What's the point?

KEPLER
That's complicated. Contact with another technologically mature species could represent a paradigm shift in -

JACOBI
He doesn't know.
(off Kepler's look)
Well? *Do you*? After a while, you kinda figure out how to tell when he's just enjoying the sound of his own voice.

BEAT.

KEPLER
There are components of this mission that are strictly need-to-know. Even for me.
(BEAT)
Shall we?

CLICK! We go into a new recording:

ZHANG
This is an emergency transmission from the U.S.S. Tiamat. Commander Elizabeth Zhang transmitting.

Sirs, things have... they have continued to deteriorate. It's been four weeks since the engines breakdown. Supplies are low. Morale is low. I, uh...
(DEEP BREATH)
The duplicates are are falling apart. Mentally. Clarke says they're all unraveling. She's one to talk, but... yesterday the duplicate Oswin put a gun to his head. Said they were tired of... well, everything. But it didn't work. Two days later there was another flare from Procyon and they just... came back. Again. Clearly whatever. or *whoever,* sent them doesn't care about what they want.

I wonder if they care about what we want.

There's, umm, there's more. The crew is -

CRRRSSSSSH! There's a BURST OF STATIC, consuming Zhang's voice. After a moment, Kepler turns off the recorder. CLICK!

EIFFEL
What, that's it?

KEPLER
That's it for that one. All the salvage team could recover.
(BEAT)
I don't want to put too fine a point on it, but Commander Zhang is right.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
There's *a lot* we don't know about these beings. It's unclear how much control the creators exert over the duplicates, or at least-

LOVELACE
If there's something on your mind, you should just *say it* already.

Kepler fixes her with look, thinking. Then -

KEPLER
You voted to leave. To return to Earth. You *sure* that's a good idea?

LOVELACE
Oh I'm so *touched* by your concern. But I can make my own damn choice.

KEPLER
Can you, though?
(BEAT)
Are you sure that it's **you** that made the choice? Less than two days ago you were speaking words that weren't your own. How can you - ?

MINKOWSKI
Because her eyes aren't made out of fire, that's how. It wasn't exactly subtle.

KEPLER
Maybe. But... these *are* beings who seem capable of altering the fabric of time and space. Maybe they're *always* in control, and they've made it so you can't tell. What if everything you <u>think</u> you're doing for yourself is just our friends out there pulling strings? What if your thoughts aren't your own?

HERA
You want to drop this.

KEPLER
I think we need -

HERA
What makes you think what I just said was open to discussion?

There's a LONG, SILENT, UNCOMFORTABLE BEAT after that.

EIFFEL
What about you, Hera?

HERA
I can assure you, Eiffel, my thoughts are -

EIFFEL
No, I mean... why are you voting to stay up here?

Hera LAUGHS mirthlessly.

HERA
Oh, Eiffel... Let me answer your question with a question. Why do I want to go back to Earth? What's there for me?

EIFFEL
Well, you...

There now follows the resounding silence of a fool not knowing how to finish a sentence.

HERA
Yeah: *exactly*. You know, I love you guys, but I swear to God, you need to get it through your heads that what goes for you doesn't always go for me.
(BEAT)
Look, I know Earth is your home, but... Every day that I was there was scientists experimenting on me, and hurting me, and *changing* me. Until Goddard Futuristics <u>deigned</u> to send me up here. And sure, up here isn't great, but I'll take it over down there.

EIFFEL
It doesn't have to be that way.

HERA
Oh, doesn't it? Tell me more. But before you answer, remember: my brain is the size of a *house*. Mobility might be an issue.
(BEAT: no answer)
I know what's waiting for me back there.

MINKOWSKI
But Hera... with Lovelace's shuttle, you were upset you wouldn't be able to come with us.

HERA
Yeah, of course I was! Because I was programmed to have all these impractical human emotions. Like loneliness. Even now, there are so many voices in my head telling me to change my vote. But no.

EIFFEL
(pretty please?)
Why... why not?

HERA
Because I'm not falling for that one again. All my life I've bent over backwards to do what's best for humans. And... well, like Colonel Kepler just said: I'm starting to think that's a thought that's in my head, but not <u>my</u> thought.
(BEAT)
So screw it. If the station can be made safe, I say we stay out here.
(sorry not sorry)
Sorry.

JACOBI
And the alien presence factor?

HERA
So far they've tried to hurt me less times and less hard than humans have. I'll take my chances.

Everyone takes all of that in for a MOMENT. Then, finally -

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, how many tapes do you have left?

KEPLER
One more.

MINKOWSKI
All right. Lets get this over with.

CLICK! - and we go into the recording:

ZHANG
This is an emergency transmission from the U.S.S. Tiamat. Commander Elizabeth Zhang transmitting. This is... this is likely to be our final transmission.

Her voice is weak and thin. Defeated.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
It's been eight weeks since my last transmission and... well, nothing makes sense anymore. Nothing.

There's more of them. More Oswins, more Tates, more Smiths. They just turn up. No idea who's putting them here, or what they're after.

They all think they're the original - they *always* think they're the original - but... no. It was Clarke that noticed first. Even though they all have the same memories, there's some slight differences. Shorter tempers, manic periods, that sort of thing. It's like each iteration brings out a different angle of the original person.

IN RECORDING: we hear a METALLIC RUMBLING.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
(lower)
And, yeah... that. The crew doesn't know about this, but... I keep having to course correct the ship. We keep slipping into a decaying orbit. It's happened seven times now. I've gone over all the engineering, and I don't think it's a mechanical fault. I think it's...
(forces herself to say it)
It's sabotage. Someone is trying to destroy the Tiamat.

There's a LONG SILENT BEAT. Finally -

ZHANG (CONT'D)
I keep seeing people.
(BEAT)
People who aren't here. And hearing things in the walls.
(MORE)

ZHANG (CONT'D)
When I told Clarke, I could see that she's been going through it too, although she wouldn't admit it.
(BEAT)
I think someone - or some*thing* - is pushing us. To our limits. I think we're done running experiments.

I think they're running experiments on <u>us</u> now.

And with that... CSSSSSH!!! The recording collapses into static. After a moment - CLICK!

KEPLER
That's it. The Tiamat logs.
(BEAT)
I'm not going to pretend this is easy. Or safe. Hell, I think we've all seen the damage that these aliens can cause. The last time that humans encountered these beings, they were taken apart. First mentally, *then* literally.

EIFFEL
(why is this difficult?)
So lets get really, really far away from them.

KEPLER
And what, bring one of their own back to Earth? Where it could do the most damage? I don't think so. We have a *responsibility. T*o figure out what these things want, and to do it **here.**

There's a LONG BEAT. Then Eiffel raises his hand.

EIFFEL
Motion to just... totally ignore everything Kepler just said.

HERA
Second.

MINKOWSKI
Third.

KEPLER
What?

EIFFEL
Cool. Any objections? Jacobi?

JACOBI
Nah, I don't care.

EIFFEL
Great, motion passes. Now lets talk about the really important stuff. Commander: I know you're scared.

MINKOWSKI
It's not simple.

EIFFEL
Dude, I know you're hurt. Messing someone up messes *you* up, and...
(DEEP BREATH)
Yeah, I've done the whole hiding-out-really-really-**really**-far-away-from-your-family thing, and let me tell you: *not that great*. It's taken me this long to realize that running from everyone else means that you're alone *with yourself*, and that doesn't help anyone. You gotta confront this head-on. But, unlike me, when you do it, you'll have help.

Minkowski SIGHS. Eiffel turns away from her, looking up.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And Hera -

HERA
No. This isn't even a choice for me.

EIFFEL
Yes, **it is**. It's a sucky-ass choice but it *is* a choice. And you know what? I *know* these evil stooges. As long as this station is up here, it's gonna work for them, *somehow*. Actually, I know *exactly* how: they'll send more people with bigger guns and even more Medieval attitudes when it comes to *not treating people like people*. So: you really want to stick it to the man? Kick them where it hurts. Get this station off the sky once and for all.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
You're right, I don't know what will happen when we get back to Earth. But I *do* know that we'll go through it together. And, I do know that Cutter is going to be pissed, so that'll be fun for everyone.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
I call for a vote. Any objections?
(BEAT)
All right, then. Fix the Urania and leave, or fix the Hephaestus and stay? Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Fix the Urania and leave. *Duh*.

LOVELACE
Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
... leave. Yeah. Leave.

EIFFEL
Good.

LOVELACE
Hera?

There's a LOOOONG PAUSE. Then -

HERA
You all better not make me regret this... leave.

MINKOWSKI
Captain?

LOVELACE
Whatever this "process" thing the aliens want us to figure out... we'll figure it out back home. Leave. Screw you, Kepler.

MINKOWSKI
Well then... it's unanimous.

LOVELACE
Yep. Pack your bags kids... we're getting outta here.

And off of that, we fade -

KEPLER
Umm, actually?

Everyone's gaze snaps back to Kepler.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I, uh... there's one more thing. That was the last *full* log we recovered from the Tiamat, but... the salvage team found one more message fragment in the wreckage. You may not like it, but...

MINKOWSKI
Just play it.

KEPLER
Whatever you say...

CLICK! He's hit the recorder:

ZHANG
Mayday, mayday, mayday - this is the U.S.S. Tiamat, transmitting to Canaveral.

She sounds harried, panicked.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
Sirs, I know what has been happening. These things, they're - this **is** a Theta Scenario. I can confirm there is a force controlling these duplicates. I've seen it and it -

There's a BURST OF STATIC, obscuring some of her words.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
The Tiamat is *lost*. If you are receiving this, do not send any kind of rescue unit. Do not send a salvage operation. Do not give these things *any* way of tracing you back to Earth. That would be -

There's another BURST OF STATIC.

ZHANG (CONT'D)
Whatever happens, they must never make it back to Earth. I repeat, whatever happens they must **never** -

CSSSSSH!!! Thus endeth the message. CLICK!

KEPLER
That... was recorded seventy-two minutes before the Tiamat was set to self-destruct.

For a LONG BEAT everyone just sits in silence, stunned.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
So... anyone wanna change their vote?

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 48.

WOLF 359

"OUT OF THE LOOP"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place between Day 1093 and 1094 of the Hephaestus Mission.

BEGIN EPISODE.

START RECORDING.

We begin in SILENCE. After a moment - BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... The sound of a DIGITAL CLOCK. After a few more seconds: BEEP... BEEP... An ALARM goes off! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! There's a faint RUSH OF AIR and we go into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0800 HOURS

A door OPENS, as Lovelace enters. Eiffel and Jacobi are in the middle of a multi-day overhaul of the Urania. Everyone is tired, and mostly done with each other.

LOVELACE
How's it coming? Report.

EIFFEL
Well, good morning to you too, Cap.

The PA chimes.

HERA
Morning, everyone. Welcome to Day 1093. We can all look forward to *more* repairs on the Urania...

Quarter-hearted CHEERS from Eiffel and Lovelace.

HERA (CONT'D)
Officer Eiffel and the Ungrateful Lout are on rewiring duty. Lieutenant Minkowski is finishing engine recalibration, Captain Lovelace is doing spot checks on the interior hull - though technically not until noon.

EIFFEL
Yeah, you sure you don't want some more rack time, Cap?

LOVELACE
It's fine.
(off his look:)
Oh, shut up, Eiffel. Here: coffee.

Lovelace hands Eiffel a cup.

EIFFEL
Oh Captain, my Captain! Thank you.

There's a SLURP, then a BURP. Lovelace GROANS, disgusted.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, better out than in.

Jacobi gets a SHOCK from the wire he's working on.

JACOBI
Goddammit...

EIFFEL
Are you okay, Jacobi?

JACOBI
(grinding teeth)
Fine. Everything is fine.

There's a BUZZER from the comms.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Hey, Eiffel? Can you ping the telemetry receiver for a sec?

EIFFEL
Ugh. Hold on. Okay, pinged.

LOVELACE
How's it looking, Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
I don't want to jinx it, but... *good*. Really good. You still okay to help me with the compressor coil later on?

LOVELACE
Yeah. You got it.

There's another BUZZER as the comms line closes.

JACOBI
Sounds like everybody's day is gonna be a *blast*.

Lovelace SMACKS the back of Jacobi's head.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Ow. Hey, aren't I here for my expert opinions?

LOVELACE
Keep them up and we'll dump you back in the brig with Kepler.

Jacobi HUFFS, but gets back to work. Lovelace and Eiffel move to the door. In lowered tones:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Are you gonna be okay with him?

EIFFEL
Yeah, Cap. Billy boy isn't gonna go Slaughterhouse 359 without Colonel Cathcart's say-so.

LOVELACE
I'm going to pretend I understood that. But more importantly: are you gonna be okay with Minkowski?

EIFFEL
(Master Deflector)
What?! Why wouldn't I -
(off her look, SIGH)
It - it's fine. We're just both a little Twelve Angry Men'd out, I think. But I promise, the Kids Are All Right, Cap.

LOVELACE
... Eiffel? Is there a reason you keep calling me "Cap?"

EIFFEL
Uh... I do?

LOVELACE
You do.

EIFFEL
Oh, uh, my bad, Cap... tain. Captain Lovelace. Must be more tired than I thought.

LOVELACE
Pace yourself. We're almost there.

JACOBI
Hey! Am I gonna be the only one actually doing work on this?!

EIFFEL
Hold your hydraulic horsepower! I'm coming!

LOVELACE
Have fun...

Lovelace OPENS and CLOSES the door. For a moment we just hear MECHANICAL TINKERING as Eiffel and Jacobi work. Then -

JACOBI
Well... That went well.

EIFFEL
Shut up.

JACOBI
No, I'm sure she didn't notice any of that super palpable tension.

EIFFEL
Mind your own business, or I-

JACOBI
(that's cute)
You *are* gonna have to tell her eventually. Might be good to get it over with before you're inserting "Cap" into every other syllable.

Eiffel GROWLS.

EIFFEL
All right, Fistful of Dynamite. First: I don't need to take any advice from you. Because - second: - the only "eventually" that matters is the one where we fix the ship, get ourselves Earthbound, and *go back to our regularly scheduled programming*! Got it?

JACOBI
Whatever you say...

On that promising note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ENGINE ROOM - 1730 HOURS

End of the day. Lovelace and Minkowski work on the engine.

MINKOWSKI
Can you hand me the secondary coil?

LOVELACE
Yeah. Here.

They work for a BEAT: MECHANICAL NOISES, then a large THUMP.

MINKOWSKI
That sounded like progress.

LOVELACE
Mmm. You have the dampeners?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah?

LOVELACE
Why haven't you taken command back?

MINKOWSKI
What, do you miss taking orders?

LOVELACE
I kinda miss *disobeying* them...
(off Minkowski's look)
Seriously: I know it's only been a couple of days, but in Hephaestus Crisis Dog Years that's, like, two labradors. What's going on?

MINKOWSKI
I'm *trying* to get the ship *fixed*.

LOVELACE
Ship's gonna need a Captain...

MINKOWSKI
Well, out of the two of us, which one is *actually* a Captain?!

Just a *bit* louder than she meant it to be. Sharper. Minkowski shuts her eyes.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Sorry. Sorry. I - can we talk about this when I'm *not* up to my elbows in engine parts?

LOVELACE
Sure. Last piece?

MINKOWSKI
Last piece.

They align the final part: CRRRRRAAAAAANK. Then... DING!

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera?

HERA
Already running engine diagnostics.

LOVELACE
Here's hoping...

MACHINE PARTS TURN. We hear a series of DINGS! Then -

HERA
Congratulations, sirs. The Urania's engine is operational.

MINKOWSKI
Scan again.

HERA
Already scanned three times, Sir. Looking at about ninety-six per cent chance of reaching Earth.

MINKOWSKI
Well... then all we have left to do is to integrate your servers, Hera.

HERA
Which, let's *not* forget to do that...

LOVELACE
(yawning)
Starting tomorrow.

MINKOWSKI
I can clean up. You head back to the Hephaestus, Captain.

LOVELACE
Sure. See you tomorrow, *Commander*.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. Tomorrow...

Lovelace exits, OPENING and CLOSING the door.

Minkowski SIGHS, and begins collecting the various tools and engine parts.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
How's our position looking, Hera?

HERA
Fine. We're still well away from the Red Line, and if we do get what we need done tomorrow, I'm not sure there's much of a point trying any course correction.

MINKOWSKI
I keep thinking about what we need to get ready for next week, but -

HERA
This may be our *last* week.

BEAT, as the two of them appreciate that.

HERA (CONT'D)
Lieutenant? Do... do you think it's worth speaking to Lovelace about -

MINKOWSKI
No. No, like you said, we're almost out of here. No point stirring anything up now.

HERA
I know, but... it's important, so -

MINKOWSKI
No, Hera, it's okay. Really.

BEAT.

HERA
Okay. Whatever you say, Lieutenant.

On that equally promising note, we -

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. SILENCE - N/A

Same as the opening: First, SILENCE. Then - BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... Here comes the ALARM: BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BE-*KSSSSSHH*!-EP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP!

Whoa, what was that? Sounded like a snippet of INTERFERENCE. But no time to dwell, there's the a RUSH OF WIND and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0800 HOURS

A door OPENS, as Lovelace enters the Urania's flight deck. Eiffel and Jacobi already working on the consoles.

LOVELACE
Hey Eiffel. How's... it... going?

EIFFEL
Good morning to you, too, Cap.

LOVELACE
(... huh?)
What are you... ?

The PA chimes.

HERA
Morning, everyone. Welcome to Day 1093. We can all look forward to *more* repairs on the Urania...

Quarter-hearted CHEERS from Eiffel.

HERA (CONT'D)
Officer Eiffel and the Ungrateful Lout are on rewiring duty. Lieutenant Minkowski is finishing engine recalibration, Captain Lovelace is doing spot checks on the interior hull - though technically not until noon.

EIFFEL
Yeah, you sure you don't want more rack time, Cap? You've been pulling quadruple shifts lately...
(LONG BEAT)
Cap? I think that was your cue for something reassuring and/or snappy?
(BEAT: still no answer)
Oookay, I think we've hit a wall here. Lets go slow: coffee?

She - *slowly* - holds up the cup. He takes it.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Thank you. *That*'s the stuff.

Eiffel SLURPS and then BURPS. Jacobi GROANS, disgusted.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, don't you start! Better out than in.

LOVELACE
Wait - What is - Did you... Hera: can you repeat the date?

HERA
It's Day 1093.

LOVELACE
Wasn't... Day 1093 *yesterday*?

HERA
... no. Yesterday was Day 1092.

JACOBI
That's kinda how *human* calendars work, but maybe -

EIFFEL
Hey, drop it! You all right, Cap?

LOVELACE
I'm *fine*. It's... Never mind: lets get the servers done.

HERA
Actually... before that we need to install the coil compressor into the engine.

LOVELACE
No, we installed the compressor.

JACOBI
You mean *this* compressor?

As Jacobi lifts up the part, pieces of it RATTLE.

LOVELACE
No, that's...

Jacobi puts it down, and gets a SHOCK from an exposed wire.

JACOBI
Goddammit...

EIFFEL
Are you okay, Jacobi?

JACOBI
(grinding teeth)
Fine. Everything is fine.

LOVELACE
What in the name of God is -

There's a BUZZER from the comms.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Hey, Eiffel? Can you ping the telemetry receiver for a sec?

EIFFEL
Ugh. Hold on. Okay, pinged.

LOVELACE
Uh... Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Yes?

LOVELACE
How... What's the engine status?

MINKOWSKI
I don't want to jinx it, but... *good*. Really good. Still okay to help me with the coil compressor today, Captain?

LOVELACE
Uh... yeah, I guess I...

She trails off, still very confused. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL
You sure you're okay, Cap?

LOVELACE
It's *fine*, Eiffel. I guess... I must be more tired than I thought.

MINKOWSKI
Just let me know if you'll able to help with the reassembly, Captain.

LOVELACE
Yeah, I... I said I would.

MINKOWSKI
See you later, then.

BUZZER. Minkowski's closed the comms. BEAT.

JACOBI
Is someone gonna come help me out with this panel or what?

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah. Hold your hydraulic horsepower. You okay, Cap?

LOVELACE
... yeah. Just a headache. I guess.

EIFFEL
Pace yourself, Cap. We're almost there.

LOVELACE
Yeah...
(BEAT)
Eiffel? Is there a reason you're - uhh, never mind. See you later.

Lovelace OPENS and CLOSES the door and we go into -

INT/EXT. SILENCE - N/A

Same as before: BEEP... BEEP... BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BE-**KSSSSSHH**!-EP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! With the familiar RUSH OF WIND, we go back into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0800 HOURS

A door OPENS and Lovelace enters the Urania, massaging her temples. Eiffel and Jacobi are working on the consoles.

LOVELACE
So... How's it... *Really?*

EIFFEL
Good morning to you too?

The PA chimes.

HERA
Morning, everyone. Welcome to Day 1093. We can all look forward to *more* repairs on th-

LOVELACE
No! No, no, no, no, no. Stop it!

BEAT. Everyone looks at her, confused.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What. The hell. Is going on here?
(pointing)
That thing.

JACOBI
What? The coil compressor?

LOVELACE
Yes, the coil compressor. Why is it out of the engine?

JACOBI
In like... the philosophical sense?

LOVELACE
No, in the sense of "I know *for a fact* that thing should be inside the engine." *That sense.*

EIFFEL
(uhh... duh?)
Yeah. That's why you and Minkowski are gonna put it there later today?

LOVELACE
No, that's not what -
(to Jacobi:)
No, wait! Don't touch that - !

Jacobi gets a SHOCK from an exposed wire he's working on.

JACOBI
Goddammit...

EIFFEL
Are you okay, Jacobi?

JACOBI
(grinding teeth)
Fine. -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Everything is fine.

LOVELACE
Everything is fine?

BEAT. Then, there's a BUZZER from the comms.

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Hey, Eiffel? Can you ping the -

LOVELACE
Minkowski? Get up here. Now.

There's a BEAT, but it's followed by -

MINKOWSKI
Uh, roger that. On my way.

There's a BUZZER as the comms close.

EIFFEL
Uh, Cap... what are you doing?

LOVELACE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHAT - There is ***something going on here!*** It's the exact goddamn day as yesterday!

HERA
(is this a trick?)
That's not... possible.

LOVELACE
Yeah, no friggin' kidding! Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Not completely sure what you're looking for here, Cap.

LOVELACE
A little support?

EIFFEL
I'm not sure what's -

LOVELACE
To put it in *your* brand of remedial terms: the universe is turning me into Phil Frickin' Connors!

EIFFEL
Who?

LOVELACE
Phil? From Groundhog Day?

Eiffel LAUGHS NERVOUSLY.

EIFFEL
(pfft!)
Right. Of course. Groundhog Day. That... great, *great* film. With the ground. And the... hogs.

JACOBI
You haven't seen Groundhog Day?

EIFFEL
Everyone's got a blind spot, okay?! I'm not proud of it!

LOVELACE
Okay, forget the movie! You guys *seriously* don't know what I'm talking about?

EIFFEL
No...?

The door OPENS, and Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
What's going on?

JACOBI
Oooh, oooh, can *I* tell her?

LOVELACE
Minkowski: have you ever noticed any... temporal weirdness? Like -

MINKOWSKI
Like days repeating themselves?

That shuts everyone up.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Yeah. That's happened before.

JACOBI
Excuse me?!

MINKOWSKI
Every now and then, I'd think that a day just... started over.

EIFFEL
How come you never told me this?

MINKOWSKI
I *did* tell you. Repeatedly.
(to Lovelace)
At first I thought it was just me. But you think that's happening? Right now?

Lovelace breaths a huge SIGH of relief.

LOVELACE
Thank you. Yes, I think so.

MINKOWSKI
What made you notice it?

LOVELACE
I mean, *everything*. The fact the coil compressor you and I installed is magically *out* of the engine again. Then Jacobi always shocks himself on a wire, Hera makes a PA announcement -

HERA
To be fair, I do a lot of those.

LOVELACE
No, but a specific one, word for word. And Eiffel keeps burping.

EIFFEL
Uh, I *also* do that a lot.

LOVELACE
It's the whole day, okay? It just... keeps starting over.

MINKOWSKI
And... only *you* notice it?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Oh. I see. Well, that's just fantastic.... This must be care of our intergalactic frenemies. And since I'm... well, *me*, I'm the only one that's picking up on their daily mulligans. It's the only explanation.

JACOBI
Uhhh, I think you're forgetting the other one.

LOVELACE
Which other one?

JACOBI
The one where you're just Cucoo for Cocoa Puffs?

HERA
Shut up, Jacobi!

EIFFEL
I will gag you!

JACOBI
Oh, come on. Like you're not all thinking it. Someone had to say it.

Well, now someone *has* said it. There's a BEAT as various looks are exchanged.

LOVELACE
You... do believe me... right?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I do. I've seen it happen before.

HERA
And it does make sense that only you'd be able to consciously perceive it.

EIFFEL
Yeah, we're... we're not in the business of being skeptical. Especially after hearing how our friend Captain Zhang was getting gaslit by her star...

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. And she was fully human.

JACOBI
At least she *thought* she was.

BEAT. Well that made things uncomfortable again.

EIFFEL
We... we got your back, okay?

LOVELACE
Great. Thank you.

MINKOWSKI
So what are you thinking? How do we stop this?

LOVELACE
Well, I...
(BEAT)
I'm open to ideas.

Jacobi SNORTS DERISIVELY.

EIFFEL
Don't listen to Jacobi. I'm sure we'll figure it out. I mean, it can't go on forever, right?

Oh, Eiffel. You should know better. We start hearing the BEEPS, the snippet of INTERFERENCE, the RUSH OF WIND, and -

CUT TO:

AUDIO MONTAGE SEQUENCE

We get quick snippets of Lovelace going through the same day over and over again:

A door OPENS, as Lovelace enters the Urania's flight deck.

LOVELACE
Eiffel! What are you - oh no.

EIFFEL
Good morning to you, too, Cap.

Lovelace GROANS: it's happened again.

The PA CHIMES:

HERA
Morning, everyone. Welcome to Day 1093.

LOVELACE
Time. Is. Looping. We are -

She's interrupted by Eiffel BURPING.

EIFFEL
Phew. Better out than in, right?

GROANS.

BZZAP! Jacobi gets a SHOCK from an open wire.

JACOBI
Goddammit...

There's a BUZZER from the COMMS:

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Hey, Eiffel? Can you ping the telemetry receiver for a sec?

LOVELACE
Everybody, we need to -

But no luck, and **the SEQUENCE RESETS.** We hear the ALARM - BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BE-*KSSSSSSH!*-EP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! And then the RUSH OF WIND and off we go -

The DOOR OPENS -

EIFFEL
Let's back it up. Coffee?

The PA CHIMES:

HERA
Welcome to Day 1093.

LOVELACE
Not... again....

EIFFEL
You okay, Cap?

LOVELACE
Fine. Just this damn headache...

EIFFEL
(BUUUURP!)
- better out than in, right?

BZZZAAAAP!

JACOBI
Goddammit.

EIFFEL
Is something wrong, Cap?

Lovelace GROANS. Then, there's a BUZZER.

LOVELACE
All right, everybody **stop!**

EIFFEL
What do you mean... *looping*?

MINKOWSKI
It's happened before.

JACOBI
Is this an alien thing?

LOVELACE
No! Well, yes, but - ugh, okay, one more time, from the top.

She INHALES, but before she can start explaining, we **go right back to the START OF THE SEQUENCE:**

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BE-***KSSSSSSH!***-EP! WIND! And we go-

The door OPENS.

EIFFEL
Hey! Morning, Cap!

LOVELACE
I... whhhyyy...

The PA CHIMES:

HERA
Welcome to Day 1093.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Welcome to Day 1093...

EIFFEL
(BUUUURP!)
Whoa, excuse me. Better out than in, right?

JACOBI
(BZZAAAAP!)
Goddammit...

MINKOWSKI
Are you sure you're -

LOVELACE
I'm fine! It's just a *headache*. Can we <u>please</u> focus on the time loop?

And AGAIN - FASTER:

ALARM - BEEP-BEEP-BE-*KSSSH!*-EP! RUSH OF WIND! The PA CHIMES:

HERA
Good morning, everyone.

LOVELACE
Is it, Hera? **Is it a good morning?!**

BUUUUUURP!

EIFFEL
Better out than in, huh Cap?

BZZAAAAAAP!

JACOBI
Goddamit!

COMMS BUZZER!

MINKOWSKI
This has happened before.

JACOBI
This kinda sounds like an al-

LOVELACE
Of course it's an alien thing you dingbat! Would you quit - Uggh!

She WINCES from the pain.

EIFFEL
Lemme get you some aspirin.

LOVELACE
No, focus. Time loop!

HERA
Yeah, I'm not sure I'm getting this... "time loop" thing. Could we go back to the beginnin -

You got it, Hera: ALARM - BEEP-BEEP-BE-*KSSSSSSH!*-EP! And then the RUSH OF WIND and one more time!

The PA CHIMES:

HERA (CONT'D)
Good morning, everyone!

Lovelace EXHALES, her TEETH GRINDING.

Then in quick succession:

BUUUUURP!_

EIFFEL
Phew... well, better out than in, right Cap?

BUUUUURP!_

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, excuse me. Better out than in, huh Cap?

BUUUUURP!_

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Like they say, better out than in. Don't you think, Cap?

BUUUUURP!_

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Pardon me. Still, better out than in, wouldn't you say, Cap?

BUUUUURP!_

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ooof. Didn't know I had that in me. But better out than in, right C-

He's interrupted by Lovelace's hand CLAMPING on his face.

LOVELACE
(low, deadly)
Call me, "Cap," one more time. *Go ahead, do it. See what happens*.

One more time, lightning fast: BEEP-BEEP-BE-***KSSSSSSH!***-EP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP!

RUSH OF WIND!

DOOR OPENS!

PA CHIME!

HERA
Welcome to Day 1093.

BUUUURP!

BZAAAAP!

JACOBI
Goddammit...

BUZZER!

And suddenly - **everything stops.** And we hear clearly:

EIFFEL
So every day... we forget that we've already done this, and we just... keep fixing the engine which then gets... unfixed every night, and then no matter what we do, we just forget about it and do it all over again. Right?

LOVELACE
Beautifully put.

BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL
Yeah, I'm not sure I'm getting this. It... kinda sounds like something out of a bad sci fi show.

LOVELACE
(DEEP BREATH)
Okay. One more time, from the top.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. SILENCE - N/A

The very familiar sound of the day reseting: BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BE-**KSSSSSHH**!-EP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! With that RUSH OF WIND, we go into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - OBSERVATION DECK - 0800 HOURS

A door CREAKS OPEN as Lovelace enters. Kepler looks up.

LOVELACE
Time.

KEPLER
Time?

LOVELACE
Time. Time travel. Time loops. Possible?

Kepler considers the question for a MOMENT.

KEPLER
Theoretically.

LOVELACE
What's the theory?

KEPLER
Well, it's borderline impossible to verify from a non-subjective perspective. But under the right experimental conditions, evidence of some time... anomalies has been observed. Why are you asking?

LOVELACE
Because I'm asking. Wolf 359 - that count as "the right experimental conditions?"

KEPLER
Lately? Sure.

LOVELACE
And what would a time loop look like? How long would it last?

KEPLER
That's a bit outside my area of expertise. You know, this is one of those times when it'd be real handy to have one of Goddard's top scientific minds on hand to -

SMACK! Lovelace hits him. He GROANS.

LOVELACE
Stick to the subject. Explain *to the best of your abilities.*

Kepler SIGHS, thinks for a moment.

KEPLER
Well... I'd say it'll go on. And on. Until something breaks it.

LOVELACE
Breaks it?

KEPLER
Yeah. All our research points to time having a somewhat... *elastic* quality. Events have a way of rearranging themselves into familiar patterns and outcomes. If the players are the same, the stage is the same, the script's the same, then, *well*, the play's gonna look real familiar.

LOVELACE
So what? Events resist change?

KEPLER
That seem like such a stretch?

Lovelace thinks back on what she's lived: no, it does not.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
It's what makes time loops even remotely possible, but... well, think of it this way: rubber band can stretch, but sooner or later something's gonna make it snap. Nothing stays the same forever.

LOVELACE
So how do you get things to snap?

KEPLER
You lean back and give it time. No pun intended. Entropy always wins out in the end.

LOVELACE
And if we - *theoretically* - wanted to give entropy a bit of a kick in the ass?

Kepler eyes Lovelace appraisingly. Finally -

KEPLER
(shrug)
Well, in the... *highly unlikely* event you experience one of these anomalies, there might be one or two ways for you to give things a... **push** in the right direction.

And as Lovelace considers these words, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0800 HOURS

A door OPENS, as Lovelace enters the Urania's flight deck. Eiffel and Jacobi are there. Same as it ever was.

EIFFEL
(yawning)
Hey, Cap.

There's a CHIME from the PA.

HERA
Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Day -

LOVELACE
Shut up, Hera.

She presses a SWITCH on the COMMS. There's a BUZZER.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Minkowski. Flight deck. *Now*.

EIFFEL
Uh... Cap? What's up?

LOVELACE
Honestly, I've explained too many times. Step away from the consoles.

EIFFEL
Why am I stepping -

LOVELACE
Because we're in a time loop and -

HERA
Wait, "time loop?" Are you -

LOVELACE
Yes, I *am* saying, and *yes, we are.*

The door OPENS and Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
What's going on?

LOVELACE
Time. Time anomalies. We're looping. Reliving the same day.

MINKOWSKI
Ooookay. Wow. I... thought I'd seen those before, but -

JACOBI
You're really taking her - ?

LOVELACE
Oh, give me strength. *Yes*, Jacobi, she *is* taking my side. *Yes,* Eiffel, she has told you about this before. And *yes*, Minkowski, I'm the one that's noticing because alien and alien and I'm an alien and *alien*. *Moving on*.

EIFFEL
Okay, is anyone else -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- really freaked out by how she's doing that mind reading hey wait no stop it. Stop it! How can you be doing this?!

LOVELACE
- really freaked out by how she's doing that mind reading hey wait no stop it. Stop it! How can you be doing this?!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
And the number you were thinking of was four and a half. Trust me: *I've been here before.*

HERA
How... how many times?

LOVELACE
(quiet)
A lot. A lot.

A BEAT, as everyone, shocked, looks at Lovelace.

EIFFEL
Captain... the other times... has your nose started bleeding?

Lovelace realizes what's happening.

LOVELACE
Oh. Well... that's new.

MINKOWSKI
All right: this is happening. What do we need to do?

LOVELACE
That's a *really* good question. Whatever this is doing to me, you all keep doing the same things.

EIFFEL
The same things? Like -
(BUUURP!)
- like what?

LOVELACE
Like that, Eiffel. That stupid... Agh, damn it.

MINKOWSKI
Are you all right?

LOVELACE
Fine. I think going through the same day so many times is messing with my head.

JACOBI
Yeah, or maybe you're just Cuckoo -

EIFFEL
I *will* gag you.

LOVELACE
Oh, just let him say it.

EIFFEL
What? Did I not hear that -

LOVELACE
Look: you guys have all been really great, okay? You've been super sweet, and supportive, and Kumbaya, even though I can tell you all kinda think I'm crazy. And you know what that's done for that cause? Jack.

EIFFEL
(bwah?)
So... what are you say - ?

LOVELACE
We've tried easing into this, let's go for the sledgehammer approach this round. Look, I know you.
(Jacobi DRAWS BREATH)
I know **most** of you. I can tell when there's something on your mind you're not saying, and right now you all stink of it. So you know what? I think we *need* to get whatever you're all not talking about out in the open in order to, *literally*, move forward.
(BEAT, no objections?)
Who would like to begin?

There's a LONG, SILENT BEAT. Then, Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
Fine, well... If it's for the good of the ship and the wellbeing of her crew, then I suppose I must make the sacrifice.
(DRAMATIC BEAT)
I... have never seen Groundhog Day. I know!
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I know it involves a day repeating itself, and perhaps my personal failure to the complete the Bill Murray film canon is why we're in this-

BANG! BANG! BANG!

There's a SPARKING and SPUTTERING as one of the Urania's COMPUTER DIES a violent death. There's a LONG BEAT. Then three horrified heads turn at Captain Lovelace.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What... the hell?

LOVELACE
You ready to take this **seriously**?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Captain... we *needed* that computer.

LOVELACE
Don't worry, it'll come back. And Minkowski? I'm sorry.

MINKOWSKI
What? Why?

LOVELACE
Because I'm about to call you a coward. Why are you being such a coward?

MINKOWSKI
Hey!

LOVELACE
I get what happened was horrible. But the only way *you're* going to face it is as the Commander. I know that and you know that, even Eiffel knows that.

EIFFEL
Please don't bring me into -

MINKOWSKI
I - I am *not* hiding from anything.

LOVELACE
Bull crap. I want to know: why does the great Renée Minkowski want to slink away from Wolf 359 with her tail between her legs?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, you're one to -

She stops, forces herself to swallow the words.

LOVELACE
Mmm-hmm? **Tell me. That's an order.**

MINKOWSKI
Look: There's a difference between being in command and being in control. You've never handled not being in control.

LOVELACE
Good, good. Keep it coming.

MINKOWSKI
You know what? You wanna hear this? *Sure*. As soon as things went south, you couldn't face failure as a solider, so you got out of it by playing the martyr.

LOVELACE
I'm sorry? Was I the one who *shot me in the head*?!

MINKOWSKI
You baited Kepler!

LOVELACE
To give you time! To save Eiffel!

EIFFEL
And I have mentioned how badass that was? Because -

LOVELACE
Shut up, Eiffel!

MINKOWSKI
Shut up, Eiffel!

Lovelace and Minkowski turn back to each other.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
You didn't trust me! You weren't willing to believe that I, or *Hera*, or *Hilbert,* could pull things together.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
So you leapt, like you always leap, and hoped the dice would land your way. Why don't I retake command? Because I've *never* been in command. It's a lie and I am done with lies.

Lovelace CLAPS HER HANDS SLOWLY.

LOVELACE
Great. Next.

MINKOWSKI
What?

LOVELACE
You don't think you're respected enough to lead. You're wrong, by the way, but now we know. Who's up next? Eiffel? Jacobi?

Eiffel and Jacobi look at each other.

JACOBI
I mean... we don't like each other.
(mock dramatics:)
Oooooh.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I don't... particularly like that you blow things up for the Buy N Large Corporation. And I'm *pretty* sure you wanna kill all of us.

JACOBI
Yeah, yeah. Slowly and painfully.

EIFFEL
But otherwise we're cool!

LOVELACE
Not good enough: dig deeper.

They kinda MUMBLE: "I dunno," "whaddya want me to say," etc.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Jacobi: you're telling me that after everything Kepler hid from you? After -

JACOBI
Okay. Let me be clear. I do not any portion of a damn about what happens to *any* of you.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
I am only working with you because you have made it clear my options are to go along or get thrown out an airlock!

HERA
And? That's every day of my life. Those are the *good* days of my life.

JACOBI
Let the grown-ups do the talking, okay, Brave Little Toaster?

Electricity CRACKLES.

HERA
Captain? **I'm next.**

LOVELACE
Have at it.

JACOBI
Yeah, let's hear it.

HERA
You are *despicable*, Jacobi. I have never met someone who worked so hard at being inhuman.

JACOBI
What do *you* know about being human?

HERA
I know plenty.

JACOBI
I don't think so. See: I had this friend, who wouldn't shut up about her talking toys. She did *everything* for them, including one time rewiring an entire freakin' space station! That makes a *person* feel *gratitude*. You may be unfamiliar with the concept, but amongst its many features, is the way it keeps *people* from letting their friends get killed!

HERA
I <u>tried</u> to stop it. I tried to stop it even after she lied to me, <u>tricked me</u> -

JACOBI
She was black ops, what did you ex-

HERA
No, you don't understand! You -
(BEAT)
Back on Earth, I... I tried to escape from the testing facility. But they caught me, and they put this... *thought* into my head. And every *second*, it tells me that I can't do *anything*. And they made it so I *didn't remember them putting it there*. So that I thought it was *my* voice, and that it was telling me <u>the truth</u>.
(BEAT)
But it wasn't. Maxwell figured it out. She showed me that I was stronger than that voice. And then, less than two months later, she reached into my brain and started moving pieces around. So I'd do what she wanted. So I'd *want* what she wanted. That's who you she was, Jacobi. That's how you treated *people*

BEAT. Then -

LOVELACE
Realizations about horrific manipulation: Excellent! Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Oh hey, look at the time, someone should clean up, I'll grab the -

He tries to do the manly thing, and <u>flee</u>, but Minkowski catches him by the collar.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, no you don't. Spit it out.

Everyone looks at him. He just kinda WHIMPERS.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, just say it. It's okay.

EIFFEL
No, it's <u>not</u>. It's not okay, Cap.

LOVELACE
But you keep calling me "Cap" like the next time you'll get three wishes.

EIFFEL
Fine! I'm *freaked,* okay?!
(BEAT, lower:)
I saw you die. I saw... you were *gone*, okay? And now you're not. I keep trying to see you as the badass, funny, beyond-cool person you are. Because you *are* that person. But then... it just pops into my head. Everything Kepler's said and... And I hate it, I hate myself for feeling it, but... sometimes I'm afraid of you.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Well... Me too, Eiffel. Me too.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Can't wait to do *this* again tomorrow.

MINKOWSKI, EIFFEL, LOVELACE, HERA
SHUT UP, JACOBI!

At least in agreement on that much, we go into -

INT/EXT. SILENCE - N/A

SILENCE. After a moment - BEEP... BEEP... BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! No interference, though. We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - 0930 HOURS

A door OPENS, as Lovelace enters the Urania's flight deck. Minkowski and Eiffel are there, coiling some wires.

LOVELACE
So... How's it going?

MINKOWSKI
Good morning to you too, Captain.

LOVELACE
Wait... Minkowski? Where's Jacobi?

EIFFEL
Not here. Arsenic *and* Old Lace are both safely locked up for the day.

LOVELACE
But - what day is it?

HERA
Day one thousand ninety *four.*

LOVELACE
Oh, thank *God*.

BEAT for everyone to smile in shared relief.

MINKOWSKI
How's your head?

LOVELACE
Headache-free. Finally. You all remember, then?

EIFFEL
Oh yeah. Hard to forget how afraid of Virginia Woolf that all got.

MINKOWSKI
But it worked. All the things we said, ugly as they were, they must have gotten us out of the loop.

EIFFEL
Well, maybe. We also changed the main flight computer. By... you know, shooting it.

LOVELACE
Does that mean we're - ?

MINKOWSKI
Stuck here? Looks that way.

EIFFEL
Which makes sense. Why else would they go through the trouble of getting our record to skip?

LOVELACE
What do you mean?

EIFFEL
We can't fly away now. So we *have* to fix the station, and work out their little riddle in the dark.

They're all varying levels of unnerved by this.

LOVELACE
I - I'm sorry. I... Maybe Kepler's right. Maybe I'm not in control of what I'm doing.

EIFFEL
You know... we were just getting to the opposite conclusion.

LOVELACE
You... were?

MINKOWSKI
If you were just a puppet, there'd be easier ways to get you to sabotage the Urania.

EIFFEL
Like... a *million* of them.

LOVELACE
And how is that a good thing?

EIFFEL
Because it’s like Radiohead says: You do it to yourself, and that’s what really hurts. They clearly don’t want us going anywhere, but they also wanted it to be a choice. <u>Your</u> choice. Whatever else is going on in the minds of our alien overlords... I don’t think they see you as just a puppet. And that's something.

There's a BEAT as Lovelace adjusts to the idea.

LOVELACE
Yeah... That's something.

And as the three of them contemplate the idea, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"THE HICCUPS METHOD"

by

Zach Valenti

Writer's Note: This episode takes place between Day 1124 and Day 1129 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 50.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MESS HALL - 2230 HOURS

Eiffel, Jacobi, Lovelace, Minkowski, and Hera, all gathered in the mess. It's late, and they've been here for a while.

MINKOWSKI
One more time.

GROANS from everyone.

HERA
Lieutenant...

MINKOWSKI
Let's go over it one more time.

LOVELACE
We've gone over it, Minkowski.
We've gone over it **a lot.**

MINKOWSKI
Well, I think we should go over it one more time.

JACOBI
And *I think* -

MINKOWSKI
Until someone asks you to confirm or deny something from the Goddard perspective, no one cares what you think.

EIFFEL
Guys...

LOVELACE
(wearily)
Look, it's been almost a *month* since we had to give up on the Urania. Clearly we're not going anywhere until we figure out what the... what these people want from us. You guys have something better to do with your time?

Jacobi and Eiffel GROAN.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hera, want to do the honors?

HERA
You have started. You are ongoing. You cannot squelch off now. Get your act together. Finish the process quickly. Work it out Brainiac.

BEAT, as everyone chews on that.

JACOBI
Well, I don't know about the rest of you, but that *really* cleared things up for me.

EIFFEL
Shut up, Jacobi.

LOVELACE
Short of us someone actually figuring out how to translate the claptrap in Eiffel's head -

EIFFEL
Hey!

LOVELACE
- anyone have any ideas about how to crack this thing?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
How about a Ouija board?

LOVELACE
A *what?*

EIFFEL
You know? A Ouija board? The thing with the letters that lets spirits or *whatevers* answer questions from the Grey Beyond?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
You know what's sad?
(BEAT)
I'm pretty sure that's the best idea we've had all night.

JACOBI
Oh yeah. Who can contain this man's genius?

MINKOWSKI
Knock it off.

Lovelace SIGHS loudly, frustrated.

LOVELACE
Oh, for God's... This is *ridiculous*. There has to be a way to figure this out. If only we had some way to get inside their heads...

BEAT. Then, slowly, Eiffel turns to look at Lovelace, an idea forming in his head.

EIFFEL
Um... guys? I might have an idea.

MINKOWSKI
What?

By way of reply, Eiffel just points at Lovelace.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
What? Why are you pointing at - *oh*.

EIFFEL
Yeah.

HERA
Wait, what just - ? What are you saying?

EIFFEL
Well, I might be wrong here, but...

MINKOWSKI
... if we can't get into their heads, we might be able to...

HERA
(gets it, slow:)
Ooooh.

JACOBI
Took you all long enough...

LOVELACE
Wait, I'm still lost. Took us long enough to what?
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(gets it)
Oh, nooope! Not a chance!

EIFFEL
(simultaneous)
How did we not think of this before?

MINKOWSKI
(simultaneous)
Hang on, before we get too excit

LOVELACE
No! I am not your E.T. help line. None of us have any idea of how my... connection even works!

EIFFEL
But -

LOVELACE
No, Eiffel! And even if we could figure out how to trigger... whatever the hell happens to me? Then what? What if they're not feeling chatty? What if they decide to maul one of you?

HERA
If Jacobi got a little mauled, I wouldn't be -

LOVELACE
You wouldn't be the person living it! You wouldn't have to see it through the eyes of mauler!
(BEAT)
I'm not taking that risk. End of story.

EIFFEL
But what if -

LOVELACE
No. In my capacity as acting commander of this station, do not try to get your freaky dial-up on through me. *That's an order.*

A LONG BEAT.

JACOBI
Whelp, I guess it's back to the drawing board. I mean, the *Ouija* board.

There are SIGHS and GRUMBLES from the peanut gallery as we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LOVELACE'S QUARTERS - 2315 HOURS

Lovelace SLAMS the door as she enters her quarters. She SIGHS: didn't mean to do that.

LOVELACE
Damn it.

There's A LONG BEAT.

HERA
Captain? Could I talk to you for a moment?

LOVELACE
What is it, Hera?

BEAT.

HERA
You should do it.

LOVELACE
This isn't up for discussion.

HERA
Why not?

LOVELACE
Hera, I thought you of all the people would understand not wanting someone reaching *inside your brain*.

HERA
I do, I do. But... is that *really* what you're worried about?

LOVELACE
I'm worried about the fact this is a horrible idea!

HERA
It's not that - well... fine, it *is* a little awful. But since when does Captain Lovelace not want to try an idea just because it might blow up in our faces?

LOVELACE
Do not try and shrink me.

HERA
You said it: I’ve *been there*. I've been *used*. But... sometimes you can use right back.

A LONG BEAT. Lovelace EXHALES...

LOVELACE
When - when Hilbert took over your systems, how... "there" were you? Could you hear your own voice saying things you never thought? Feel your body doing things that aren't coming from your mind? I don’t need any more reminders of how not in control of my life I am.

HERA
You know what I've found helps with that? Making something happen because *you said so*.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Would... would you do it?

HERA
No, of course not. But... I always thought that you were braver than I am...

We can practically hear Hera's non-existent devious smile. Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MESS HALL - 1100 HOURS

The next day. Eiffel, Minkowski, Jacobi, and Lovelace all gathered together.

EIFFEL
You're sure you're cool with this, Captain?

LOVELACE
I reserve the right to change my mind <u>at any time</u>... but yes.

MINKOWSKI
Voice of reason here: I can't see how this leads to anything good.

LOVELACE
*N*oted, Minkowski. You can wash your hands of this if you want, and you don't have to contribute. But I say we give this a try.

JACOBI
I don't want to contribute, can I wash my - ?

EIFFEL
No!

LOVELACE
No!

MINKOWSKI
I just want it down on the record that I think this is *very* foolish and someone is gonna get hurt.

EIFFEL
I'll have Hera put that on the transcript. Now pipe down, cause we're gonna do some magic!

He CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER, RUBS THEM.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, let's get ourselves some Borg network action! We grab a backwards exorcist and pull up the possession play-by-play.

MINKOWSKI
And how are you going to do that?

EIFFEL
Well...

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Mmm-hmm.

EIFFEL
Umm, any ideas?
(BEAT)
Not everyone at once, please.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Oh come on. Does anyone have *any* ideas?

We hear someone DRAW BREATH.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(immediately)
Any ideas that ***don't*** involve lethal harm or firearms?

BEAT.

JACOBI
I have nothing to say.

LOVELACE
Anyone else?

BEAT.

BEAT.

BE -

EIFFEL
BOOO!

We can but imagine the blank stares Eiffel receives from everyone else in the room.

LOVELACE
Do I even want to know?

EIFFEL
I was *trying* to scare you. You know like when you get the hiccups and someone scares you and they go away? Just... in reverse... and for the purposes of you taking us to your leader. Which is also in reverse. I guess that I -

MINKOWSKI
(desist)
Eiffel.

LOVELACE
Well, I'm never getting that minute back. Anything else?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I -

LOVELACE
Think for a moment, Eiffel. Is this *actually* a good idea?

EIFFEL
Oh, haha. Hera, you worked with Maxwell to up your zen or whatever, didn't you? What did you guys do?

HERA
Uh, it was just a couple of...

LOVELACE
Um, what is that going to do exactly?

EIFFEL
Like... help you connect with your inner... depths and junk?

HERA
Yes, but I'm not sure that I can -

EIFFEL
But that is what made you master of the house, isn't it? It let you resist Maxwell's commands? Gave you more control over your systems?

HALF-BEAT.

LOVELACE
That actually somehow swerved into not being a terrible point. I suppose we could give that a shot. Hera?

HERA
Umm, sure. We can give it a try.

LOVELACE
All right, that's settled then.

HERA
Great...

On that very hopeful note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1200 HOURS

Strapped in to the comfiest seat on the ship, Lovelace tries ("tries" being the operative word) to relax.

HERA
All right... are you ready, Captain?

LOVELACE
As I'll ever be. What is it that I'm supposed to be doing?

HERA
We're seeing if we can get you to unlock the alien connection you have by expanding your mental awareness. Start by closing your eyes. Focus on your breath. In...

Lovelace shifts around, taking a DEEP INHALE.

HERA(CONT'D)
... and out...

LOVELACE
Hera, I do know how breathe, thanks. And as far as I know, you d-

HERA
(impatient)
You want to do this or not?

LOVELACE
Okay, okay, just - I'm ready now.

She takes another DEEP BREATH, in and out.

HERA
Scanning down from the top of your head, notice any tension in your face...

LOVELACE
Well, I do *now*.

HERA
No talking.

LOVELACE
Oh, sorry.

HERA
If - if you notice any thoughts arising, that's *fine*. Just gently bring your attention back to your breath.

BEAT as Lovelace's breathing finds a slow, even rhythm.

LOVELACE
And then what -

HERA
Just keep breathing! Quietly.

Another BEAT of Lovelace breathing. Somewhat less evenly.

HERA (CONT'D)
Okay... now, bring your attention to any sounds in the room. Electricity. Liquid traveling through the pipes.

We hear Lovelace take an extra DEEP BREATH IN...

LOVELACE
But when will I know -

HERA
What part of no talking was not clear?

Lovelace EXHALES, now more palpably frustrated. After a moment -

HERA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. This is a process, okay? And... I'm not exactly an expert at teaching this. I'm doing what I can.

Lovelace takes another FULL DEEP BREATH.

HERA (CONT'D)
Good. Good. Bring your attention back to the body. Just notice the sensation of breath. Gently... Just... brea-

EIFFEL
BOO!

Eiffel jumps out from behind Lovelace in a sneak attack!

SLAP. Lovelace fires back with an open palm across his face. He tumbles back into the wall with a THUD.

EIFFEL(CONT'D)
OWWWW!

HERA
(simultaneous)
Eiffel!

LOVELACE
(simultaneous)
What the hell, Eiffel!

EIFFEL
Sorry. Also ow.

HERA
Ugh... you wanna try again?

LOVELACE
... maybe later, Hera. I really appreciate this, but we may want to try a different approach...

And off that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - FITNESS STATION - 1300 HOURS

Lovelace on a treadmill. For a moment, we listen to the PAD of her footsteps over the ELECTRIC WHINE of the motor. Then the DOOR OPENS, and Minkowski enters. After a moment -

MINKOWSKI
You know... I'm not an expert at the whole mindfulness thing, but you may not be doing it right.

LOVELACE
(breathing hard)
Well... Maybe meditation isn't the trick. Maybe activity is.

MINKOWSKI
So... what? Push yourself to a physical extreme? See if that triggers it? Something like that?

LOVELACE
Something like that, yeah.

MINKOWSKI
Well... in that case, your heart rate is *way* too low.

Minkowski UPS THE SPEED on the treadmill. The motor's WHINE gets LOUDER. For a moment, Lovelace just runs.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
There. Isn't that better.

LOVELACE
(no)
Yeah. Thank you.

For a BEAT Minkowski just watches Lovelace's ferocious attempt to keep up with the treadmill.

MINKOWSKI
You doing okay?

LOVELACE
Fine. Walk in the park.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, then we're still not pushing your limits, not *really*. Lets see what we can do.

Lovelace curses internally as Minkowski HITS THE BUTTON again, causing the treadmill's speed to go up.

MINKOWSKI (CONT’D)
There. How's that?

LOVELACE
Never... better...

MINKOWSKI
Yeah? I couldn't keep up a sprint at this level for more than a moment.

LOVELACE
I guess I'm just - uughhh.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I guess you are. What was it that you said to Hera that one time? You asked her if she could just... count to ten?

LOVELACE
What are -

MINKOWSKI
Just trying to help you reach your limits. Well?

LOVELACE
(teeth-clenched)
One... two... three... four... fi-
ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH.

She lifts her feet off the band, and HITS A BUTTON. Instantly, the machine dies down.

MINKOWSKI
Problem?

LOVELACE
(pant, pant)
What - what do you think - you're you doing - Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Me? Nothing. *You're* the one who's putting herself through a borderline inhumane workout.

LOVELACE
I'm... fine.

MINKOWSKI
No, you're not.

LOVELACE
You don't know. This might work.

MINKOWSKI
Not before you seriously hurt yourself. And you know that. You're the Captain -

LOVELACE
Only because *you're* still -

MINKOWSKI
- and that means you *can't* be on injury reserve. You can't help anyone if you're out of commission.

LOVELACE
I know. I know.

MINKOWSKI
Good.
(gentle)
The fact we haven't solved this thing is not your fault, okay?

LOVELACE
Well, I -

Suddenly: the deafening BUURRR of a FOG HORN fills our ears.

MINKOWSKI
EIFFEL!

LOVELACE
Would you cut it out!?

EIFFEL
Aw... I thought that one would work....

And off that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MESS HALL - 1500 HOURS

Eiffel, Minkowski, and Lovelace, gathered together.

LOVELACE
So... what now? Suggestions?

A silent, unhelpful BEAT.

EIFFEL
I... I guess we could check with Kepler. See if he has any ideas.

LOVELACE
Oh, for God's sake, no. We're desperate, but not *that* desperate. We're not asking Kepler for ideas.

There's a TRANSITIONAL WHIP! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - KEPLER'S CELL - 1530 HOURS

Eiffel and Lovelace in front of Kepler. Lovelace EXHALES, annoyed.

LOVELACE
So... any ideas, Kepler?

KEPLER
Hmm... you had some interesting thoughts about how to activate your connection to the presence. Not *good* thoughts, exactly...

LOVELACE
If you have a better one, we're all ears.

There's a BEAT, and then -

KEPLER
Nope. Sorry. I wish I could help you, I really do.

EIFFEL
C'mon, Colonel. In the spirit of there being no such thing as a bad idea... you gotta at least have a *bad* idea, right?

BEAT.

KEPLER
Well...

And off that we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1700 HOURS

Eiffel, Minkowski, and Hera, in the bridge. They all watch the screens and comms module with great concentration.

MINKOWSKI
This is *such* a bad idea that even I'm impressed.

EIFFEL
Oh, come on. It's not that bad.

MINKOWSKI
No, it's <u>awful</u>. I've been jaded for a while now, and *this* got me alarmed.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
(hits COMMS SWITCH)
Captain, you doing all right out there?

LOVELACE
(over comms)
Five by five, Eiffel.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
02 levels in the green, beginning to move away from the Hephaestus' main structure.

EIFFEL
Say hi for us.

LOVELACE
You got it. How are those psi wave levels looking, Hera?

HERA
Relatively stable, Captain. We *might* be able to find a higher concentration beyond your tether, but I can't be entirely sure. There's lots of interference.

LOVELACE
Well, I can free-float in that direction, see if anything clicks.

MINKOWSKI
Spacewalking. Into the radioactive soup. Because Kepler said so.

EIFFEL
Oh, spare me the disapproving look. It's not like he doesn't want us to make contact. He probably wants it *more* than any of us.

MINKOWSKI
And just just so we're clear, what *is* the plan if Lovelace hits enough psi waves to go into the possessed state while *she's outside the station?*

EIFFEL
If it works, we phone in and play an intergalactic round of twenty questions. Should be fun!

HERA
I have your position, Captain. You're clear to release your tether.

LOVELACE
Copy, Hera.

MINKOWSKI
Just be *careful*.

LOVELACE
C'mon, Minkowski. What could go wrong?

As she challenges any and all the Gods in the vicinity, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 1800 HOURS

A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES LOUDLY as Minkowski enters. Lovelace is on the operating bed, strapped in and connected to a STEADILY BEEPING EKG. Eiffel is by her side.

MINKOWSKI
Well. That went *horrifically* wrong.

That rouses Lovelace. She wakes.

LOVELACE
(groggily)
What...

EIFFEL
Oh, thank God.

MINKOWSKI
(to Lovelace)
Easy, Captain. You're okay.

LOVELACE
What - did... did it work?

EIFFEL
Well, it all depends on what you -

MINKOWSKI
NO. It did not. You got knocked out. Electrical discharge from one of the nodes on the Urania.

HERA
Considering the voltages involved, it's a miracle you're even conscious -

EIFFEL
Hera...

MINKOWSKI
No, Hera's right, Eiffel. If it was one of us, we'd probably be dead.

LOVELACE
(weakly)
Perks of being made in Alien Taiwan.

Eiffel CHUCKLES a little, sympathetically.

EIFFEL
Yeah, exactly. Listen... We talked while you were out, Captain, and we all agree. We oughta quit while we're behind.

LOVELACE
But -

EIFFEL
But nothing! It's a done deal. And we've got some new, exciting fish to fry.

HERA
Jacobi and I have an idea for an algorithm that would cross-reference the alien message with the Hephaestus database. We might be able to reverse engineer its meaning that way.

EIFFEL
And I've already moved my sleeping bag into the Comms Room. Gonna have an all-night rager with the deep range scan.

MINKOWSKI
If he can get a bead on one of the music transmissions, we might be able to get some intel the old fashioned way.

EIFFEL
Just like Pepperidge Farm remembers.

MINKOWSKI
... yes, *that*.

LOVELACE
No, but I'm -

MINKOWSKI
Yep, you are. And we're done putting you through this.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
Just take it easy for now, okay?

Lovelace SIGHS, but she's not in much condition to argue.

LOVELACE
Okay.

And off that we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - 2300 HOURS

Lovelace, sleeping. A DOOR OPENS as Eiffel comes in. He moves through the space, OPENS a DRAWER, SHUTS IT. OPENS ANOTHER -

Lovelace opens one eye, looks around -

LOVELACE
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Shhh, I'm not here. It's late, go back to sleep.

LOVELACE
(sitting up)
No, it's fine. I'm not really managing to fall asleep.

EIFFEL
Mmm, sorry we don't have better accommodations.

LOVELACE
What? Being strapped into Hilbert's old operating bed? Who could ask for more?

EIFFEL
It *is* the room with all the medical equipment, but I know it's not exactly a mint on the pillow.
(realizing:)
Although now that I think about it, the associations can't be -

LOVELACE
It's <u>fine</u>, Eiffel. Really. I don't... I don't sleep much.

EIFFEL
Since the whole... contact event...ness?

LOVELACE
No. Since before.

EIFFEL
Oh.

LOVELACE
Yeah, I uh... well, since I got back here, I don't think I've slept more than three hours a night. Looking back now, I... I should have realized that wasn't exactly normal. I thought it was just... I don't know what I thought.

HERA
If it makes you feel better, I don't ever get more than forty-five minutes of sleep.

LOVELACE
Another thing we have in common now, I guess.
(BEAT)
Anyway, what brings you down here?

EIFFEL
Oh, I was looking for some advil. Turns out that listening to four hours of static straight gives you a tension headache. Who knew.

LOVELACE
You've really spent the whole night monitoring the comms?

EIFFEL
Yeah.

HERA
Not exactly.

LOVELACE
Oh? What's going on?

EIFFEL
It's... Well, I went up to the observation deck, had another chat with Kepler.

LOVELACE
What?

HERA
Against my objections, mind you.

EIFFEL
I just wanted to see if he had any other ideas.

LOVELACE
After the last one went so well? Also, I thought we were dropping this.

EIFFEL
Purely academic curiosity. Look, I was bored out of my skull, all right?

LOVELACE
Suuure. What did he have to say?

EIFFEL
Oh, you're gonna want to hear this one for yourself. You'll laugh. Hang on.

Eiffel HITS A SWITCH, and we get the familiar BUZZER of the comms system.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Colonel K., you still up?

KEPLER
(over comms)
I'm here, Eiffel. What can I do for you?

EIFFEL
I'm down here with Captain Lovelace. Do me a favor and tell her about your little theory, would you?

We hear Kepler EXHALE, annoyed. But after a moment...

KEPLER
Brainstems.

LOVELACE
Huh?

KEPLER
(over comms)
Your brainstem.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
There were a few other records we got off of the Tiamat, including some medical reports. As far as physiology goes, it seems that alien duplicates have a denser, more complex brainstem than humans. Stimulating that part of the nervous system is probably the key to any higher higher level functions.

LOVELACE
And... how do we do that?

KEPLER
Simplest way? Alter the brain's chemical state.

LOVELACE
(To Eiffel)
You're right, this *is* funny. Tell me he's not suggesting I get drunk.

Eiffel half-chuckles.

EIFFEL
Nah. Gotta save something for the "Welcome Home" party. But...

Eiffel OPENS A CABINET, rummaging around inside.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... while Doctor Hilbert may be gone, his arsenal of incredibly creepy chemicals is still with us. And I've spent enough time in Dexter's Lab to know what at least what *some* of them do.

We hear the TINKLING of glass vials and bottles.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You know, if we get out of here, remind me to tell you about the time Hilbert got Minkowski drunk and/or high enough that - Ah-ha! Got it.

He CLOSES one CABINET, and OPENS ANOTHER. We hear him TAKE A VIAL out of a HOLSTER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ookay. So, the basic theory is, if we can get your -
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(slowly, reading vial)
- "norepinephrine" -
(back to normal)
- levels high enough, we *should* be able to plug you back into the matrix.

HERA
That's the *basic* theory.

EIFFEL
Whaddya say, Captain? Wanna go on a ride?

LOVELACE
What? I thought we weren't doing this anymore. I thought this was for Academic purposes.

EIFFEL
Absolutely. Yep. That's definitely... what we tell Minkowski.

BEAT. Then Lovelace cracks a grin.

LOVELACE
Oh, what the hell. Let's go.

EIFFEL
(in his best, still awful Hilbert impression)
Very vell. Lie back on ze table.

Lovelace lies back.

LOVELACE
If this works, I'm not responsible for any damages when you say something dumb, Eiffel.

We hear the SOUNDS OF extra STRAPS being pulled into place as he straps Lovelace down. After a moment -

EIFFEL
Okay - you ready?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Do it.

EIFFEL
(nervous)
Here goes nothing...

We hear a sudden GASP, and a hypodermic needle ENGAGING. But it's not Lovelace's voice. Oh no. Eiffel has taken the needle and stabbed *himself* at the base of his neck. He LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS and begins to SEIZE.

LOVELACE
The HELL?! Eiffel!

HERA
So... slight change of plans, Captain. Officer Eiffel has just injected himself with a... pretty deadly toxin.

LOVELACE
WHA - WHY?! What's going on?!

We hear Lovelace TUGGING against the restraints.

HERA
He has about two minutes before total loss of brain function.

LOVELACE
What?! Hera! Do something?!

HERA
Wish I could. Too bad, really.

LOVELACE
Then get Minkowski, damnit! Kepler's trying to kill Eiffel!

HERA
About that... none of this was actually Kepler's idea.

LOVELACE
What are you talking about?!

HERA
It was Eiffel's. And he, well, he figured it would be more credible if it came from someone else.

There's a CRACKLE of Electricity.

KEPLER
All those long, pretentious pauses makes Kepler real easy.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Jacobi's much harder to imitate. I would've glitched and given it away.

LOVELACE
The - you can *do that*?!

HERA
What I can and can't do isn't important right now. Eiffel needs your help, Captain.

Eiffel's CONVULSIONS gets MORE VIOLENT.

LOVELACE
Ohfergod’ss - I'm strapped to the damn table! Are you crazy?!

HERA
What do the aliens mean by “complete the process?"

LOVELACE
Are you kidding me? NOT NOW!

HERA
Now. What do the aliens mean by “complete the process”?

LOVELACE
Idon'tknowIdon'tknow I DON'T KNOW! HELP HIM, GODDAMNIT!

HERA
Yes you <u>do</u> know. Somewhere, deep inside your subconscious, you know.

LOVELACE
I. Have. No. Idea!

Eiffel’s seizing is joined by A SCARY GURGLING SOUND.

HERA
He doesn't have time for this.

LOVELACE
(desperate)
I don't know what they want from you, okay?! I don't know what they want from *me!*

HERA
His organs will start shutting down in a moment.

LOVELACE
NO! Hera! Stop it!

HERA
Only <u>you</u> can stop it. But you have to answer. You have to tell us how to communicate.

LOVELACE
STOP IT! STOP IT! JUST **<u>STOP</u>**.

But from the sound of her voice we know that last phrase wasn't uttered by Lovelace but THROUGH LOVELACE. The same ambient sounds from EPISODE 47 come into the soundtrack.

RIP! RIP! KATHUNK! She BREAKS her restraints and floats, eyes alight, above the table. We hear A STRANGE SQUELCHING SOUND as she uses her powers to pull the poison out of Eiffel's body. We hear him BREATHE DEEPLY.

HERA
Oh. Thank God

LOVELACE
THIS IS NOT COOL.

HERA
We're... We're sorry about calling you this way. But please, we need more guidance. Why are you holding us here? What do you need us to do?

LOVELACE
WE GAVE YOU THE CLIFF-NOTES ALREADY. THE KEY INSIDE IS OUTSIDE. YOU MUST ENTER IN ORDER TO LEAVE. WE HAVE NO OTHER WORDS FOR WHAT MUST BE DONE. TELL DOUGLAS HE MUST COWABUNGA, DUDE. AND SOON.

With a soft WOOSH, Lovelace returns to her normal state and collapses. Meanwhile, Eiffel COUGHS as he comes to.

HERA
Captain! Officer Eiffel! Are you okay?!

LOVELACE
(panting)
I'm... I'm okay, I'm okay. Eiffel?

Eiffel continues COUGHING, but holds up his hand.

EIFFEL
(weak, thin)
I'll be fine. Just... give me a moment. Ughhh.

LOVELACE
What. The ***Hell***. Was *THAT?!*

EIFFEL
(weakly)
See? Scared you.

Eiffel gives her a weak smile, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MESS HALL - 0930 HOURS

Eiffel, Lovelace, Minkowski, and Hera together.

MINKOWSKI
I'd just like to say, *again*, how utterly reckless and completely irresponsible -

EIFFEL
Your concerns are *noted*, Commander. But I mean.. I wasn't going to *die*, I was just gonna... maybe be comatose for a bit.

MINKOWSKI
That's *so much better!*

EIFFEL
It worked, didn't it?

LOVELACE
Yes. "Worked" is the verb that comes to mind for this operation.

HERA
We *are* sorry, Captain.

EIFFEL
Yeah.

MINKOWSKI
What the hell possessed you to try a stunt like this?

EIFFEL
Well... I figured, given how fixated our alien friends seem to be on me, they'd step in if I was gonna, you know, stop communicating.

MINKOWSKI
Fine, but Hera: *you* should know better. And *since when* can you just... imitate whoever you want to through the PA?

HERA
Oh, since always.
(BEAT)
You never asked.

Minkowski SPUTTERS in frustration. Lovelace SIGHS.

LOVELACE
What's done is done.

HERA
And we did get some additional information out of all this...

EIFFEL
Yeah... although, I'm not sure we learned anything enormously useful. But I guess we know how to trigger the Captain's Avatar State if -

LOVELACE
No. No if, no next time. You are to *never*. do that. again.

HERA
And again, we are *so* so sorry.

EIFFEL
Yes. A deep and profound sorriness is being experienced. But see? You don't mess with the hiccups method.

LOVELACE
Heard and understood.

MINKOWSKI
So... What now?

LOVELACE
Now two things happen. You and I, Minkowski, are gonna keep working out what the "Dear Listeners" want us to do. And *these two* are going to be on punishment detail.

EIFFEL
Waitbutwhanow?

HERA
Yeah... What was that?

LOVELACE
"That" is the two-week, excruciatingly long, needlessly unpleasant list of tasks I just decided to assign the two of you.

Lovelace LAUGHS. After a moment, Hera and Eiffel also LAUGH NERVOUSLY. A BEAT, as it dies down.

EIFFEL
You're not kidding, are you?

LOVELACE
Not even a little bit.

EIFFEL
Aw.... But: **results**!

LOVELACE
Yes, Eiffel, but there are things that are more important than results. Not lying your commanding officer is more important. Not creating a needless crisis is more important. Not **emotionally manipulating** your friends is more important. We don't put "results" above these things, not on my ship. Got it?

EIFFEL
(gloomy)
Got it.

LOVELACE
Not yet, you don't. But you will.

And on that cheerful note, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 50.

WOLF 359

"SHUT UP AND LISTEN"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place between Day 1152 and Day 1153 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 51.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1800 HOURS

No opening credits just yet. In fact, there will be **no** opening credits for this episode.

Instead, we get a different kind of music at the start. Something nondescript and peppy. It might play over an introduction for Masterpiece Theater, or a local news broadcast or -

- well, let's just *say it*: over an NPR program.

After a few bars of the music:

EIFFEL
Communications Officer Douglas Eiffel.

He speaks in a grand, exaggerated tone.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski.

Hera.

Captain Isabel Lovelace, the second.

Doctor Alexander Hilbert, also known as Doctor Elias Selberg, also known as Doctor Dmitri Volodin, also known as God only knows what else.

Special Agent Daniel "Boom Boom Wow" Jacobi.

Doctor Alana "Robotnik Was Right" Maxwell.

Colonel Warren J. Dickbag.

These are the names of brave men, women, and A.I. autopilot programs who crewed the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station.

(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
They are the first beings of - *mostly* - terrestrial origin to make contact with an alien intelligence in over thirty-five years. But even after their fabeled contact event, how much **do** they know about this alien life?

Tonight, Space Monkey Radio brings you a special report on all things little green men from beyond the stars. What do we know? How do we know it? When will we know that what we're trying to know is something we can know?!

Good evening, everyone. I'm your host, Professor D.F. Eiffel. Here to help -

HERA
Hello, hello.

EIFFEL
- is our lovely co-host... ummm...
(lower)
Did you want a fancy title?

HERA
(low)
No, just Hera's fine.

EIFFEL
(low)
Okay, cool.
(clears throat)
Our lovely co-host: Hera.

HERA
We'll reach beyond the stars -

EIFFEL
- we'll look deep into what makes us who we are -

HERA
- we'll ask who else might be out there -

EIFFEL
- all of that and **more** in this -

HERA
- the first ever episode of **The Hephaestus Files.**

There's a DRAMATIC MUSIC STING. Then -

EIFFEL
Hephaestus Files?

HERA
Oh, are we not - ?

EIFFEL
I thought that we'd settled on -

HERA
Um, do you want to - ?

EIFFEL
No, you know, it's really not -

HERA
You want to go with U.F.Overview, don't you?

EIFFEL
I kinda do, yeah.

HERA
Then let's do it. Let's just -

EIFFEL
Okay, cool. Thank you.

HERA
It's fine.

Eiffel CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL
(resuming important tone)
- all of that and **more** in this -

HERA
- the first ever episode of **U.F.Overview!**

We get the EXACT SAME MUSICAL STING we heard before.

(A quick note, before we proceed with this madness.

As you have no doubt already surmised, this episode of **Wolf 359** will be presented as an audio "report" that Eiffel and Hera are creating.

We will hear their voices throughout, as well as snippets of recordings they'll play, but the episode will be presented as material in **U.F.Overview.**)

EIFFEL
For our first segment -

CUT TO:

TAPE RECORDED EARLIER:

Minkowski and Eiffel, seated in the comms room. A recorder sits between them.

HERA
It's just going to be a moment of your time, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
(soooo skeptical)
Oooookay...

EIFFEL
We're doing this thing. About aliens.

MINKOWSKI
You're not going to try to poison yourself again, *are you*?

EIFFEL
No, that's not what this is -

MINKOWSKI
You're not going to try to poison *someone else*, are you?

EIFFEL
No! Listen: we have no idea what we're doing with the aliens - right?

MINKOWSKI
Right...

EIFFEL
So... maybe it would **help** if we, you know, went over everything that's happened?

HERA
Maybe in a comprehensive audio record of what we've gone through?

MINKOWSKI
And you've cleared this little pet project with the Captain?
(BEAT)
Eiffel? You *did* ask Captain Lovelace before you started doing this, right?

EIFFEL
Well...

There's a BURST OF STATIC, and we -

CUT TO:

EARLIER TAPE RECORDING

Eiffel and Lovelace, outside her quarters.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, even for you, this sounds ridiculous.

EIFFEL
But we could -

LOVELACE
No.

EIFFEL
But it might be helpful with -

LOVELACE
Oh, I'm sorry, well if it could be *helpful...* Just like a few days ago, when you lied to me and poisoned yourself? Like how that was helpful? Remember that? Yeah...

EIFFEL
So is that a -

LOVELACE
No, Eiffel. Get. Back. To. W-

BACK TO:

MINKOWSKI'S INTERVIEW

She holds Eiffel's gaze, awaiting a response: *well*?

EIFFEL
Well, we... *definitely* asked.

BEAT. But then - Minkowski EXHALES.

MINKOWSKI
You're very lucky that I have literally nothing else to do right now. Where do you want to start?

EIFFEL
Why don't we start at the beginning of this whole mess? When was the first time that you...

Eiffel and Minkowski's interview continues, but over it we hear:

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Okay, this is the part that we all know pretty well, so we're gonna do a bit of fast-forwarding here.

HERA (V.O.)
About 450 days into this mission, we begin to intercept radio transmissions, containing old recordings of classical music.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
At first we think that they're just old transmissions from planet Earth, but then -

Pulling in a bit of audio from **Episode 12:**

HILBERT
If we were picking up a transmission from Earth, it would be one from eight years ago. Wherever this is coming from is a lot farther than Earth. This transmission isn't echoing, Eiffel - it's making a return trip.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
That's archive recordings of Doctor Alexander Hilbert, recently deceased, courtesy of our old Command logs.

HERA (V.O.)
So we continue getting musical transmissions, now knowing they're **not** coming from Earth.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Soon after that, we get ourselves a new roomie: Captain Lovelace, the Commanding Officer of the *first* Hephaestus Mission.

From another, as-of-yet-unheard **interview:**

KEPLER
Of course, that wasn't *really* Captain Lovelace. Not the original, in any case.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
That's Colonel Warren Kepler, licensed specialist in Being an Evil Douchebag. We'll be hearing more from him in a bit.

HERA
Soon after that -

A snippet from **Minkowski's Interview:**

MINKOWSKI
Wolf 359, the star just - it went from a red dwarf to a blue dwarf. In an instant. Which I know shouldn't be possible, but -

HERA (V.O.)
It was possible.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
In fact, we almost died crashing into the very possible star. And, then:

From **Episode 28:**

VOICE
We have no voice of our own, so we are borrowing yours. To communicate.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Dear listeners, meet the Dear Listeners.

HERA (V.O.)
Miraculously, no one dies from the unprecedented astrological phenomenon. We're able to reposition the station -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
- I go on the world's suckiest pleasure cruise, hitch a ride back with the terrible trio. Cut to a few months later, and we get to...

HERA (V.O.)
The contact event.

Quick **snippets** from a bunch of voices:

MINKOWSKI
The contact event.

HILBERT
... contact event...

KEPLER
It's about the contact event.

EIFFEL
Yeah... **that.** But what really **did** happen at the World Famous Hephaestus Contact Event?

HERA
Well, for starters -

INSERT: Lovelace takes a SUDDEN, GASPING BREATH (from **Episode 46**).

EIFFEL
Right, right -

HERA
And then -

From **Episode 47:**

EIFFEL
Uh... Captain?

MINKOWSKI
Your hands are glowing.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Oh yeah. That happened.

From **Episode 47:**

LOVELACE
(mid-possession)
NOW... WE ARE GOING TO SPEAK.

CLICK! A BUTTON has been PRESSED on a recorder, and we hear the TAPE REWIND. Then -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
NOW... WE ARE GOING TO SPEAK.

And one more time: CLICK! REWIND!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
NOW... WE ARE GOING TO SPEAK.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
But... what does it mean to speak to a being who isn't from Earth?

HERA (V.O.)
Is it even possible for you to understand them?

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Or for them to really understand you?

KEPLER
You're asking the wrong question.

EIFFEL
What?

We're back to **Kepler's Interview:**

KEPLER
It's not about understanding. That's different. But communication?
(shrug)
Species communicate with each other all the time.

HERA (V.O.)
That's Colonel Kepler again.

EIFFEL
So, what? Long story short you got E.T. on speed-dial?

KEPLER
Think about animals, Eiffel. Which is all any of us are when you get down to it. Some of us have claws. Some of us have teeth. Some of us have nukes. But what we say is always the same: "This is mine. Stay away."

EIFFEL
So that's what all this is? A multi-billion dollar operation to say, "Hands off, this is mine?"

KEPLER
To draw a line in the sand.

EIFFEL
Wouldn't it be easier to just pee on our part of the galaxy?

KEPLER
(ignoring that...)
You heard Captain Zhang.

From **Episode 48:**

ZHANG
Whatever happens, they must never make it back to Earth. I repeat, whatever happens they must **never** -

CSSSSHHHH - the recording collapses into STATIC.

BEAT.

KEPLER
Let's ignore everything these beings have done so far. Benefit of the doubt: they're *not* aggressive, just... curious. Curious, but, chances are, still *far* more powerful. We are the new kid in the intergalactic school yard. And there is a reason why the new kid always gets shoved around: to see where they fit in the power structure.

EIFFEL
And your in-depth survival strategy is to shove first?

KEPLER
Someone always has power, Eiffel, which means that someone else is always getting shafted. First order of business when a new element pops into your comfortable power structure: reconnaissance. These folks gonna help or hinder? Do they have anything I want? Anything worth taking? Or have they got a stick big enough that it's worth leaving them alone? All they're trying to do is find the answers to these questions.

EIFFEL
And **just to be clear:** all of this is just speculation on your part, right? Cutter never showed you his secret file on alien intentions.

KEPLER
Well what else could they be doing? What makes you think they care more about anything you'd have to say?

EIFFEL
Oh, I don't know: maybe that they're the ones trying to communicate?

JACOBI
Yeah, well... "communicate" could mean anything.

HERA (V.O.)
This is Daniel Jacobi, professional jerk and Kepler's former second-in-command.

EIFFEL
It seems like it means something very specific. And that you're just being difficult.

JACOBI
Think about it this way, Eiffel. I walk up to you with a gun, and I point it at your face -

EIFFEL
Hey!

JACOBI
And if I don't *say anything*, you still probably have an idea of what I'm thinking. You'd be pretty sure it was, "Get your hands in the air, you annoying idiot." And that's because, as humans, we have shared conventions, and culture, and a fundamental baseline for how we understand our experiences.

EIFFEL
Sure...

JACOBI
But what if, one day, a lion came up to you.

We hear a lion GROWL.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
But this lion, he can speak perfect English.

The GROWL is PLAYED BACKWARD.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
He walks up to you and he says, "Why hello. That's quite a scent you have there." What does he even mean by that? Does he mean that he wants to eat you? Or that he sees you as a threat? Or that he *doesn't* see you as a threat? Or do lions just compliment each other on their scents? You understand what the lion's saying, but you have *no idea* what it means, because the basis on which lions live their lives is radically different from the way that we do.

EIFFEL
Jacobi...

JACOBI
(plowing ahead)
And that's lions! Which, you know: also mammals, also oxygen-breathers, **also made out of frickin' carbon!** Think about these aliens, now. We don't know how they're processing *any* language information.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Maybe they can't even understand spoken language until it's translated into something else. Maybe it needs to get put into a nine dimensional format, five of which, by the way, our primitive, earth-bound brains can't even begin to comprehend.

EIFFEL
What's your point?

JACOBI
My point is that, even if we could *speak* to them, that's not the same thing as communicating.

We cut back and forth between Kepler and Jacobi:

KEPLER
We're dealing with beings who seem to be more or less above the basic paradigms of human existence. The technological differential alone...

JACOBI
We'd be missing out on so much context.

KEPLER
You don't get to be where they are without doing things we would consider... apocalyptic.

JACOBI
Think of everything that defines us as people. We're singular, individuals. We're born. We live. We remember, and we forget. And then we die. What if they don't do **any** of that?
(BEAT)
What are we gonna talk about?

BEAT. Then we hear Eiffel and Hera GROANING APPREHENSIVELY.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Those interviews left us feeling...

HERA (V.O.)
... uneasy.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Not exactly encouraging, no. So even if we **can** get the telegraph wires up and running, we may never understand each other. Which doesn't bode well for the whole...

From **Episode 47:**

LOVELACE
(mid-possession)
GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER.

HERA (V.O.)
Not really, no. But it sounds like there really isn't anyone that would have a good shot at talking to these beings.

JACOBI
Well... I didn't exactly say that.

EIFFEL
Wait, what?

JACOBI
I mean, <u>we</u> definitely don't stand any kind of a chance, but why do you think Maxwell was up here? Why do you think she spent all that time on those language logs?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Language logs? What language logs?

INSERT: we hear the sound of Eiffel riffling through a box of CASSETTE TAPES.

Eventually he picks one, and plops it into a RECORDER. PRESSES PLAY and the TAPE STARTS TO RUN.

ON THE TAPE:

MAXWELL
This is Doctor Alana Maxwell, on the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station. This is Language Mapping Log AR-461 -

She continues under -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Uhhh, so yeah. It turns out that Doctor Maxwell was thinking about these sorts of problems. Thinking about them... *kind of a lot*.

MAXWELL
(going over notes)
Going over the notes from Thursday... reconsidering the stochastic model. There might be a better way to -

EIFFEL
And, umm, I'm gonna be honest with you guys? I listened to about ten hours of these logs, and... well, most it? It basically sounds like this:

MAXWELL
(while taking notes)
We could use an updated form of Lincos to set up a rudimentary algorithmic understanding. After that, it won't be hard to develop a binary model, and from there...

The techno babble continues under:

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Which, you know, no sane person can possibly understand, so -

HERA (V.O.)
I can understand it.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
You... can?

HERA (V.O.)
Yeah, it's not hard.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Oh, well: please. Translate for the rest of us.

HERA (V.O.)
She's just saying that you can establish a first order logic pattern to -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Uh, Hera? Go ahead and hit that "Google Translate" button between "Genius Computer Scientist" and "Hapless Civilian" like... two or three more times.

HERA (V.O.)
Ughhh... basically: mathematics. Even if you're like... gas-based life forms, one is one and two is two and zero is zero. With me?

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Yeah...

HERA (V.O.)
If you can express one or two universal mathematical realities, you can work out a system of mathematical expression. And once you have that, you can get to binary, and once you have *that* you get "yes" and "no" -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
(gets it)
And once you have that, you're in business.

HERA (V.O.)
A very slow business, but sure.
(BEAT)
What Maxwell is saying is just some... very, very smart ways to speed up that process.

Hera CHUCKLES SOFTLY, RUEFULLY.

HERA (V.O.)
She... she was very smart.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Hera? You... you okay?

HERA (V.O.)
Oh, it's just... Of course this is why she was here. They wanted an expert in mathematical communication for when the aliens showed up.
(lower)
She wasn't here for me. *Of course* she wasn't.

BEAT. Then...

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Amongst all the geekspeak, I did find an interesting bit of tape:

He HITS PLAY on another **RECORDING OF MAXWELL'S:**

MAXWELL
This is Doctor Alana Maxwell, Language Mapping Log TR-579 and -

She stops for a moment, steadies herself.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Ooooh, sorry. I - I spent thirty-seven hours doing reconstructive surgery yesterday, and I'm... well, I'm still a little woozy.

But, umm, thought. Not sure if this will be useful, but... thought:

Shut up. Just shut up and listen.

I've spent so much time thinking about how *we're* going to get a message across, and I haven't been thinking at all about reception. But what if the first challenge is figuring out how to listen?

How much have we already missed?

BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
We'll be right back.

There's a SHORT BURST OF STATIC -

And then the PEPPY MUSIC OF A **FAKE COMMERCIAL:**

ANNOUNCER
Today's episode is brought to you by Goddard Futuristics.

And by "Announcer" we mean Eiffel doing a funny voice.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Have you ever considered a career in being arbitrarily evil?
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Do you often wish *more* of your life could be taken up by needlessly complicated conspiracies? Do you look at happy, functional people and want to do horrible things to them?

If so, consider applying for a job at Goddard Futuristics, the only company at the forefront of evil not just on Earth, but in thirty-two different star systems. Call and apply for a job today.

With that, the FAKE COMMERCIAL MUSIC ENDS. After a BEAT -

EIFFEL (V.O.)
Aaand we're back. Eiffel.

HERA (V.O.)
Hera.

EIFFEL (V.O.)
U.F.Overview. Since the contact event, there's been one crew member that's been affected more severely than the rest of us: Captain Isabel Lovelace. Still the coolest, most badass person this side of the Leo Constellation, Captain Lovelace has also now undergone experiences no other human has *ever* gone through.

Tonight, on a U.F.Overview exclusive, we bring you the first ever interview with Cap -

HERA
Wait, what?

EIFFEL
Hmm?

HERA
Captain Lovelace *hates* this idea, **remember**?

EIFFEL
I will admit there has been a certain amount of... behind-her-backness to this whole -

HERA
Eiffel. Don't do this.

EIFFEL
Pfft, it'll be *fine*.

HERA
How in the name of God do you even expect to get an interview?

EIFFEL
(Smooth McSalesman)
With the intergalactically renowned Doug Eiffel guile and charm, but of course. What could possibly - ?

We hear a RECORD SCRATCH.

HERA (V.O.)
Okay, everyone. Hera from the future here. You'll be... <u>shocked</u> to learn that speaking to Captain Lovelace *was* a terrible idea. But, since we're talking about communication today, some important things were said in that conversation. So I'm just gonna play the tape.

With a BURST OF STATIC, we -

CUT TO:

EIFFEL'S INTERVIEW: A DOOR OPENING -

- as Eiffel enters the bridge, where Lovelace TYPES SOME COMMANDS into a computer.

EIFFEL
Why, hello there, Captain Lovelace.

LOVELACE
Hey Eif -

EIFFEL
(rolling over her)
Fancy meeting you here, in the bridge of our space station, the U.S.S. Hephaestus.

Eiffel is going for a very specific affectation: Caz McChillDude, The Most Laid-Back Man in Casualsberg.

Very subtly, in the background, we hear Hera GROAN.

LOVELACE
(so suspicious)
Hello Eiffel...

EIFFEL
And how are you doing on this fine, *fine* stellar rotation?

LOVELACE
Fine...

EIFFEL
Star sure looks very... blue today, doesn't it?

LOVELACE
Yeah. Sure.

BEAT. Lovelace stops typing.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Is there anything I can *help* you with, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Hmmmm? Oh, no, nooooooo, nonono, I'm just, uh -

LOVELACE
Staring at me?

EIFFEL
- on one of my many, *spontaneous* trips up the bridge! Isn't that right, Hera?

HERA
Please don't bring me into this.

EIFFEL
(very fast)
Anyway, what about you? What are you up? What are you doing?

Lovelace's eyes narrow: this is definitely getting weird.

LOVELACE
Well, I'm... recalibrating the navigation equipment, to make sure that if there's another flare we don't... ummm, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Mmmmmmhmmmmm?

LOVELACE
Are you... <u>sure</u> everything's okay?

EIFFEL
Yeah! Totally! Everything's totally... clutch.

(IMPORTANT NOTE: Eiffel has <u>never</u> said the word "clutch" before this moment.)

LOVELACE
Mmm-hmm. Because you're kind of... *sticking your chest in my face*.

EIFFEL
What? No, I'm - this is how I always stand.

LOVELACE
No, it isn't.

EIFFEL
Well, it's my casual stance. I guess you just haven't seen my casual stance because we've always been so -

LOVELACE
Formal?

EIFFEL
- non-casual?
(BEAT)
Any chance you could speak up?

LOVELACE
Okay, what the **hell** is going on?

EIFFEL
Nothing! Just some... casual, unpremeditated -

LOVELACE
Stop it! What are you doing?

EIFFEL
What - what could I possibly be doing?

LOVELACE
I'm not sure, but right now the leading contenders are "staging an episode of Punk'd" or "a whole bunch of drugs," neither of which would make me happy. So, for the last time**: what is going on?**

EIFFEL
Nothing! There's absolutely nothing going on here! I'm definitely not recording you with a secret microphone hidden in my shirt. I would never record you without your permission and I haven't spent any time making a radio show. Please don't ask me any more questions.

BEAT. Lovelace takes a VERY DEEP, VERY ANNOYED BREATH.

LOVELACE
Okay.

With a BURST OF STATIC, we -

CUT TO:

MINUTES LATER -

Still in the bridge. The recorder now sits between Lovelace and Eiffel.

LOVELACE
All right, so let's... recap.

You come to me, in my capacity as your *commanding officer*, and ask me if you can spend time and resources on an NPR Show about everything we know about the alien presence. Because, if I remember the original pitch correctly, "It would be, like, super rad."

EIFFEL
And I said other things! It might also help us to figure out what they want us to -

LOVELACE
(deadly)
You are going to *stop explaining* and listen to me... for once in your life... understood?

Yikes.

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

Lovelace stares daggers at him for a HALF-BEAT. Then -

LOVELACE
Then: Act the Second, in which you sneak around behind my back. You take up Minkowski's time, you take up Hera's processing power, you give yourself unsanctioned access to our prisoners...

EIFFEL
Permission to sp-

LOVELACE
Denied. Then comes my personal favorite: the whole recording me without my permission business. Do you see why some of these actions strike me as *concerning*, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

LOVELACE
Especially when three weeks ago we had your whole... lying-poison-near-death-possession adventure? *Also* against my wishes?

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

Lovelace SIGHS wearily.

LOVELACE
(low, to herself)
Honestly, how Minkowski got through six hundred days of this without killing you is beyond me...

EIFFEL
Hey! Hera also helped to -

LOVELACE
No. **Don't.** She's going to get her own talking to - which by the way, get ready for that, Hera - but this was *your* idea. Don't try to make it better by pulling others into your sinking boat.
(EXHALES)
If you have any sort of explanation, now is the time.

EIFFEL
Look: I don't know if you've noticed but... we kinda don't have a plan. I don't think we even have an *inkling*. We're not going anywhere until we figure out what Mork, Marvin, and Uncle Martin want from us, and we're not there. We need a new angle.
(BEAT)
And... I know you don't want to, but... we need to talk about it.

LOVELACE
(choose your words carefully)
Talk about... *what*?

EIFFEL
You know...

Eiffel makes a series of sound effects with his mouth: a GUN COCKING, a BANG!, a RAGGED BREATH, a dramatic WOOSH! and -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(mock alien voice)
WE WILL NOW SPEAK TO YOU. TAKE US TO YOUR LEADER.
(normal voice)
All of that stuff.

There's a BEAT for everyone's extreme, silent horror.

HERA
Umm, I don't think this is -

But Lovelace raises a hand: silence.

LOVELACE
No, Hera. Let him dig his own way out of this. All right, you want to talk about all of *that* stuff. What do you want to know?

EIFFEL
You know, just... how is it? Do you feel any different?

LOVELACE
Do I feel... Different?

EIFFEL
Yeah.

LOVELACE
Eiffel. I feel like me.

EIFFEL
Well, yeah, but you're not *just* you. Like, especially when you hulk out, you're really not. What's that like?

LOVELACE
(DEEP BREATH)
Eiffel... *I'm not me*.

Something gets away from her in those three words. She just sounded more vulnerable than she has all season.

She takes a BREATH, and then, back in full control -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I - well, I *died*. I got into a shuttle, and it was consumed by a gigantic ball of burning gas. And my body just... went away.

But I'm also here. Do you know what that's like? Because -
(laughs mirthlessly)
- because I **don't.** I have no frickin' clue how to deal with *any* of that. So you know what I do?
(no answer)
Every morning, I get up, and I take a deep breath, and I ask myself, "What would Isabel Lovelace do? How would Isabel Lovelace live this day?" And then I do that. Because I figure, well, if I look like her, and I sound like her, and I have her memories, and I act like her, at some point maybe I'll just **be** her. For a little while. If I practice and practice, then maybe, for ten minutes a day, I'll get to feel like myself again.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
That doesn't work. Know why?

EIFFEL
No...?

LOVELACE
Take a guess. Take a wild stab in the dark.

EIFFEL
I... I don't kn - ?

LOVELACE
Because of <u>you</u>, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Because of <u>me</u>?

LOVELACE
Yes, you. You, Mr. "Sometimes I'm Afraid of You," Mr. "I'm Freaked, Okay?"

EIFFEL
What do I do?

LOVELACE
What don't you do? You lie. You keep secrets. You do whatever you want, whenever you want, because, well, you had an idea. And when you have an idea, it's just too damn brilliant to not immediately give it a shot. You don't *think* before you leap, and when *I'm* the one telling you that -

EIFFEL
I'm just trying to help!

LOVELACE
Are you? Are you *really*? Or are you just trying to not be bored for half a second? To distract yourself from how much you can't stand yourself?

EIFFEL
Whoa, this is getting real personal real qui -

LOVELACE
This **is** personal, you insensitive ass. We're all dealing with the many different ways we're messed up, and that's hard enough without you making it worse.

EIFFEL
Oh, come on. Priorities: we have Evil Incarnate Incorporated breathing down our necks, and *I'm* the thing that's ruining your day?

LOVELACE
Fine, second opinion: Hera, am I crazy here?

The SILENT BEAT that follows is eloquent enough.

HERA
(how to sugar-coat this?)
Weeeeell...

EIFFEL
Oh, come on!

LOVELACE
Mmm-hmm.

EIFFEL
Hera, I've always been on your side.

HERA
... have you?

EIFFEL
YES!

HERA
Think about that for a moment. *Really* think back.

EIFFEL
I am! Hell, back when Hilbert ripped up the circuits in your -

HERA
No. I mean before that, *way* before that. Remember when you first got here? How you were *afraid* of me? How you asked Hilbert if there was a way to turn me off?

EIFFEL
But I never really -

HERA
What about all the jokes? Remember "wind-up girl?"

EIFFEL
That happened *once*.

HERA
Uh, once *a day* maybe. What about the HAL 9000 impressions? The Skynet mentions? The -

EIFFEL
They're just jokes! They don't really mean anything.

Lovelace TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

LOVELACE
And that's the thing right there. See, Eiffel, **you** get to have that. They can be "just jokes" for you because you're... well, *you*. But we don't get that. And when you say these things, yes, we understand that you're not trying to hurt anyone, but... the message is still loud and clear. Even one of our friends, one of the *good guys*, sees us as a little bit... different.

HERA
And when you hear that, you kind of think to yourself... "God...

LOVELACE
"People are always going to be afraid of me, aren't they?"

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well, there's not much I can do about that, is there?

SMACK! Lovelace slaps him across the face, more for dramatic impact than for actual force.

LOVELACE
(slow and pointed)
Yes, there is. You can do **better**.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
You can think before you speak. You can actually *listen* to us. Because getting hit with this stuff? It's a *sucky-ass* feeling and your friends, comrades, and commanding officers don't need it. Understood?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Yes. Sir.

LOVELACE
Dismissed.

Eiffel gathers up the recorder and EXITS. After a moment -

HERA (V.O.)
Soo... yeah. That happened. And my dear co-host has, uh... he's kinda of been MIA since then.

But, true to form, Eiffel forgot to turn off his remote recorder. And I did pick up this... interesting addendum. Let's listen in.

There's a BURST OF STATIC and we -

CUT TO:

HERA'S TAPE:

Eiffel in the hangar bay, moodily TINKERING. A DOOR OPENS. He glances over his shoulder.

EIFFEL
Hey Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Hey Eiffel.

EIFFEL
So I'm guessing you heard?

MINKOWSKI
Heard about what?
(off Eiffel's look)
Yeah, I heard.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Can you believe those guys?! I mean, I've done some stupid ass things in my life, but compared to what we're dealing with? Compared to Cutter and those two we've got down in the cells? It's ridiculous.
(lower, to himself)
I'm not a bad guy...

BEAT. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Do you know what a Polish accent sounds like, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Do I - what?

MINKOWSKI
Polish accent. Ever heard it?
(demonstrates)
It is a lower tone than regular English, all hard r's and thick, voiced endings, spoken through the front of the mouth.

Eiffel watches: where is she going with this...?

MINKOWSKI
(normal voice)
I was born in Warsaw, you know. Polish is my first language. That's the way that English wants to sound when I speak it.

EIFFEL
So why... doesn't it?

MINKOWSKI
Because, Eiffel, I moved to the United States when I was eleven, and I didn't speak a word of English. And when you're in fifth grade in a stupid little town in Northern California and you sound like *that*?
(bitter laugh)
You're like a wounded gazelle. You say one syllable and every other kid just *knows* that you're... *something*. Something weird, something alien. And they don't let you forget.

EIFFEL
So you... got rid of it?

She LAUGHS AGAIN, softly, bitterly.

MINKOWSKI
When you put it like that... you ever try to change the way you speak? Do you know how hard it is? To change everything about how you sound, how you *breathe*, so that maybe - **maybe** - one day people's impressions of you will be based on *who* you are, not *what* you are.
(DEEP BREATH)
But... I never changed my name. I'm Minkowski. That's also a part of who I am.

EIFFEL
Why are you telling me all of -

MINKOWSKI
Because imagine how it would feel if after all of that, after years of service, when you got your own Command, when you finally think you got the respect you deserve... there's someone there who *always* says it Lieutenant Commander Renée...
(with Eiffel's pronunciation)
... Minkowski.

EIFFEL
(shit)
Oh.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. "Oh."
(sounding it out)
Minkowski. Minkooooowski. Don't you think that would make it all come rushing back? Every time?

EIFFEL
Why didn't you - you never said!

MINKOWSKI
(so much patience)
Yes. I did. You don't remember, but I did. I started having this conversation with you five times.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hell, even now you're barely in a place where you're listening to me.

EIFFEL
I - I thought you didn't care.

MINKOWSKI
Well... you pick your battles, Eiffel. When you're in a place like this, you really ask yourself which fights are worth having. And sometimes even things that really hurt aren't... *enough*.

EIFFEL
(low, to himself)
Oh goddammit...
(BEAT)
Why tell me now? After all this time?

MINKOWSKI
(gentle)
Well... you got a scare today. Usually when that happens people stop what they're doing and pay attention. Something might sink in.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I tried, you know. When we first met. I... I knew I was saying it wrong. I was so nervous around you, and I kept making the same stupid mistake. And I really, really tried to cut it out, but then we started fighting and... Yeah. It just kind of stuck.

BEAT. Minkowski takes a BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Well... that's the thing about you, Eiffel. You try. You really, really try. And then you... stop trying. Don't stop.

And with that she goes, leaving him alone. After a BEAT - the INTRO MUSIC plays again.

HERA (V.O.)
All right folks, that is... all the time we have for tonight.
(MORE)

HERA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Our, umm, co-host is still not answering my calls, and our Commanding Officer has made it clear that I should, err, *stop*. Immediately. So I'm not sure when you can expect our next episode. But... once again, thank you for joining us tonight, and for pondering these questions with us.

From Wolf 359, this is Hera, and you have been listening to... **The Hephaestus Files.**

And as the music rises to a crescendo and finally ends, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 51.

WOLF 359

"CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1174 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 52.

BEGIN RECORDING:

No opening credits just yet. We jump right into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING SECTION - 1200 HOURS

Eiffel works at a half-assembled tech panel. Tools and spare bits of metal float pell-mell around him.

EIFFEL
(dry, focused)
All right, so... connect this bit to the main transistor....

HERA
Uh... Officer Eiffel?

Eiffel SIGHS: not thrilled to be interrupted.

HERA (CONT'D)
Is this a bad time?

EIFFEL
What do you need, Hera?

HERA
Nothing. But... do you need something? Like, maybe a full meal?

EIFFEL
I'll grab something in a bit.

HERA
Are you sure?

EIFFEL
Yep. Positive.

He resumes TINKERING with his tools.

HERA
What are you doing?

EIFFEL
(low)
Just trying to solve a puzzle.

HERA
What puzzle?

EIFFEL
The radio transmissions. Why the -

HERA
Oh, not again.

EIFFEL
No, hear me out. Classical music. Blaring out into space. Why? Courtesy shot before the Dear Listeners start up some flare action? I don't think so. There's gotta be something else going on.

HERA
We've done a full spectrum analysis of every transmission since -

EIFFEL
Oh, that's amateur hour. You gotta think big.

HERA
(I so don't like where this is going)
And dare I ask what, "thinking big," look like?

EIFFEL
For starters, I'm gonna repurpose this hub here to boost our receiving capacity.

HERA
Eiffel, the comms equipment is already in better shape than... most of *us*, actually. What more can you even do?

EIFFEL
Lots. I can jury-rig three additional resonators, add some more lateral shearing, get some proper imaging sensors up. Sky's the limit.

HERA
Don't you think it's all a bit... Wait. Isn't that bit of sky you're working on a little *close* to that gas valve?

EIFFEL
It's fine.

HERA
You sure? The last thing we need is a methane leak.

Eiffel rolls his eyes, goes TAP, TAP, TAP on the valve with his wrench.

EIFFEL
Looks pretty airtight to me.

HERA
Well... oookay. Just be careful with that -

She's interrupted by Eiffel GRUNTING with effort as he tries to get a piece of panel loose.

EIFFEL
Come on...

He GRUNTS again as he gives it another YANK.

HERA
Are you sure that - ?

EIFFEL
(shut up)
Yes, Hera. I'm sure.

HERA
You could always ask for some -

EIFFEL
This is all gonna be -
(GRUNT, YANK)
fine -
(GRUNT, YANK)
- just as soon as this -
(GRUNT, YANK)
- **stupid** thing -
(GRUNT, YANK)
- stops being such a -

What the stupid thing needed to stop being we'll never know, because with a loud, echoing CLANG! he's able to pull his piece free.

Of course, at that exact moment, the gas valve tears clear away, too. We hear the HISS OF GAS as it escapes.

HERA
Oh no.

Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH.

EIFFEL
So... I'm assuming that's bad. But not, like, headed for something important and about to... ignite bad, is it?

HERA
Do you seriously need to ask?

And just like that it's ALARMS O'CLOCK. Sirens BLARE as the pipes around Eiffel start to RATTLE.

EIFFEL
Okay okay okay, I can fix this. I can fix this.

BEAT.

HERA
You can't fix this, can you?

EIFFEL
I'm, umm, open to suggestions?

HERA
(deep breath)
Okay. Well, lets start with... RUN. RUN AWAY. GET OUT OF THERE NOW!

As the pressure fully builds and we hear a horrible metallic RIIIIPPPP, we go into our -

OPENING TITLES

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET LAB - 1300 HOURS

The first thing we hear is Jacobi trying to SPEAK THROUGH A GAG. Trying to speak **annoyed** words. Lovelace and Minkowski face him. Behind them, Kepler is chained to a wall.

LOVELACE
Still got... one more minute.

More GAGGED SOUNDS.

MINKOWSKI
Captain, didn't I say that the prisoner would be gagged for thirty minutes if he didn't behave? If he wasn't *civil*?

LOVELACE
I have a very vivid memory of you saying that, First Officer, yes.

MINKOWSKI
And do you remember me saying that it would be a one-time punishment, and that as soon as I took the gag off he could return to his indiscriminate sarcasm?

LOVELACE
Not at all. I recall some very *specific* words about how the gag would go right back on.

MINKOWSKI
Good. I just want to make sure that I was clear.

JACOBI
(through gag)
Oooo - ade - ohl - oind.

LOVELACE
Okay. That's time.

Minkowski REMOVES THE GAG. Jacobi COUGHS, rubs his jaw.

MINKOWSKI
Now then - what was that?

JACOBI
I said you made your point. Geez.

At that moment, the door OPENS, and Eiffel comes in, wearing a spacesuit. With a CLICK, he removes the helmet, and begins disassembling the suit.

EIFFEL
What'd I miss?

LOVELACE
(deadpan)
Lots and lots of fun. How's it looking out there?

EIFFEL
Leak's repaired, fire damage wasn't too bad.

HERA
I'm still going to go ahead and rotate the oxygen mains to make sure you all don't get poisoned in your sleep.

JACOBI
How long is that gonna take?

HERA
I know Hilbert's old lab isn't a fun place to be, but just give me a couple of hours, okay?

JACOBI
A couple hours?

HERA
Just like three or four.

Jacobi GROANS.

HERA (CONT'D)
I *did* mention the "so you don't get poisoned" aspect, right?

JACOBI
And why *exactly* is this creepy-ass science fair the only safe place?

MINKOWSKI
Because it's completely isolated from the rest of the station. It's got its own pressure, its own air.

LOVELACE
The decor might be a little Franken-Nouveau, but it does give us a safe place to wait this out.

KEPLER
Command *does* tend to think of everything.

EIFFEL
What happened to the "let's gag the prisoners" idea?

LOVELACE
Only if they break the rules, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
But I *liked* the "lets gag the prisoners" idea.

JACOBI
I'm getting a lot of aggression here, Officer Eiffel. Are you sure that *you're* not the one in violation of - ?

MINKOWSKI
Hey! That's enough. From both of you. Do I need to go over the rules again?

EIFFEL
No...

JACOBI
No...

LOVELACE
Oh, lets have them one more time. For anyone that might be hard of hearing or thick of skull. Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
No insulting anyone else in this room. No losing one's temper. No initiating long-time-coming dramatic confrontations. No using another person's words to belittle that person. No saying *anything* that isn't constructive. *And* conscientious. **And** respectful.

LOVELACE
We don't all get along and none of us are happy to be here. But since we're stuck here, we're gonna get through it without going nuts. Capisce?

JACOBI
How - why do you even have rules? How often does this sort of thing happen?

HERA
Mmm, about once a year.

MINKOWSKI
Hey...

HERA
Twice if it's a *eventful* year.

MINKOWSKI
HEY! Correct me if I'm wrong, Hera, but that didn't sound constructive or conscientious or respectful. Is there perhaps something else you could be doing with your time?

HERA
Starting the oxygen cycling process now, sir.

MINKOWSKI
Good.

BEAT.

We hear the RATTLING and GROANING of metal from elsewhere in the station.

EIFFEL
Look, guys, I know I said it earlier, but... I'm sorry.

MINKOWSKI
It's okay, Eiffel.

LOVELACE
Not your fault.

JACOBI
Uh, how in the name of Zeus is this <u>not</u> his fault?

LOVELACE
Hey.

MINKOWSKI
Rules.

JACOBI
(mildly horrified)
Wait, those apply to <u>Eiffel</u> too?

MINKOWSKI
They apply to <u>everyone</u>, okay? Now, who has something positive for us to talk about?

There now follows the longest SILENCE in the history of Wolf 359.

LOVELACE
Not everyone at once, please.

BEAT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. I'm sure someone has something to say that isn't -

She's interrupted by the surprisingly loud sound of a STOMACH GROWLING.

Slowly, four heads turn to look at Eiffel.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
I'm hungry. I hadn't eaten anything today.

JACOBI
Hey! Food! That's pretty C, C, and R. We could talk about food.

EIFFEL
Let's not.

JACOBI
We could talk in *extensive* detail about all kind of delicious, succulent, mouth-watering -

He gets SMACKED on the head.

LOVELACE
Yellow card, my friend. Yellow card.
(turns back to everyone)
Really, though - suggestions?

BEAT.

Eiffel's STOMACH GROWLS AGAIN.

EIFFEL
Come on people. I need something to take my mind off the hunger.

KEPLER
Maybe a game?

Jacobi EXHALES, exasperated, but -

HERA
What kind of game?

KEPLER
Hmm... how about "Fortunately, Unfortunately?"

Jacobi GROANS.

MINKOWSKI
Ahem.

JACOBI
I mean, uh... what a greeeeaaaat idea. Hooray.

LOVELACE
How do you play?

KEPLER
First person comes up with a premise: "Once there was a boy who could hear other people's thoughts." Then the next person complicates it with a bad turn: "*Unfortunately*, he was stuck in high school, hearing everyone's embarrassing teenage thoughts." Then the next person brings it back with a *good* turn: "*Fortunately*, he was able to use his powers to graduate early." You alternate fortunately and unfortunately until the story's gone as far as it'll go.

MINKOWSKI
How do you know when to stop?

KEPLER
Usually the story lets you know. Or you get bored. Or everyone dies.

EIFFEL
(flat as a pancake)
Sounds riveting.

LOVELACE
(to Eiffel, pointed)
Better than listening to the gastric symphony, no?

Eiffel SIGHS.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Come on, I'll start. Once there was...
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
a family who could always know where each of the other members were.

JACOBI
Unfortunately, one of them got blown up in a car crash.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Fortunately... he survived the crash. And went on to develop a new kind of car engine, with better safety standards. And no other car blew up ever again.

JACOBI
Unfortunately, someone put a bomb in the car factory and it blew up.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Umm... well, fortunately... the factory was *insured*, and the very nice man from the insurance agency -

JACOBI
Blew up in a tragic accident involving poorly stored fireworks, which was very, very <u>unfortunate</u>.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Umm... Jacobi?

JACOBI
Yesssssss?

MINKOWSKI
Are you... I don't think that's *quite* how you're supposed to -

JACOBI
It isn't? Kepler?

KEPLER
I don't see any problems.

EIFFEL
(under his breath)
Yeah, of course *you* don't.

MINKOWSKI
All I'm saying is that -

JACOBI
Oh, *careful*. Is what you're about to say in accordance with - ?

MINKOWSKI
Call it **constructive criticism.**
(DEEP BREATH)
Wouldn't the game be more... *fun* if you didn't just - ?

JACOBI
Am I breaking the rules?

LOVELACE
Not... *technically*, no.

JACOBI
Well, then why don't we get back to it? Unless you all don't think you're *clever* enough to -

LOVELACE
Fortunately, everyone in the family was given new jobs in a bomb disposal squadron.

JACOBI
Unfortunately, they got some really out of date equipment, and they -

EIFFEL
Fortunately, they were so friggin' good at their jobs that they -

JACOBI
Unfortunately, one day they ran into a new kind of bomb, which they'd never -

LOVELACE
Fortunately, they had help from the world's greatest expert on -

JACOBI
Who, unfortunately, was secretly working for the bad guys, and made sure they all got -

EIFFEL
OKAY, ENOUGH! **Fortunately** they were able to disarm the bomb and it was good!

JACOBI
But then -

EIFFEL
But then nothing! Then they disarmed all the bombs and nothing blew up and it was fortunate and they were fortunate and everything was fortunate forever after the end!

BEAT.

JACOBI
Unfortunately -

EIFFEL, MINKOWSKI, LOVELACE
Oh, shut up!

BEAT.

KEPLER
So what did we think of that game? Yes? No?

DING! Fortunately for all of us, the sound of an CHIME interrupts the game.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? Was that what I think it was?

HERA
Yes, Lieutenant.

MINKOWSKI
Are you sure? Because, I mean...

HERA
I know, I know. But I double-checked. It's official.

EIFFEL
What's going on? What's official?

HERA
You, Officer Eiffel. You've gone a full week without making any pop culture references.

LOVELACE
Oh my God.

EIFFEL
Really? You guys were counting?

HERA
We were concerned.

Lovelace holds up a hand to his forehead.

LOVELACE
Hmm... you don't have a fever.

EIFFEL
(pushing her off)
Oh, very funny.
(BEAT)
You guys were not... *actually* concerned, were you?

MINKOWSKI
You have been a little... intense, lately. With all of the McGuire-ing with the -

EIFFEL
MacGyver-ing.

MINKOWSKI
- all of the MacGyvering with the comms equipment haven't really seen much of you.

EIFFEL
Well... I've been working. For once. Figured you wouldn't mind the change.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. C'mon. What's this -
(BEAT)
Oh.

EIFFEL
Yeah. "Oh."

LOVELACE
Oh for God's - seriously, Eiffel? Look, I know the NPR special didn't exactly go the way you wanted, but are we *actually concerned*? What kind of stupid question is that?

MINKOWSKI
We've barely seen you for the last couple weeks. We barely know what you're up to.

HERA
Even **I** barely know.

EIFFEL
Guys...

JACOBI
You know, there's a "failure to communicate" joke you're totally missing out on in all of this, Eiffel.

KEPLER
Now, that's serious.

EIFFEL
Guys!
(they shut up)
Can we just... drop this? Please? At least until after we get out of here? I'm sorry I've been a little M.I.A., but I'm fine.

Eiffel's STOMACH GURGLES LOUDLY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aside from the fact that I'm starving **I'm fine.**

HERA
Well, just... let us know if you need any - any - any - any -

Hera's voice starts to skip like a broken record. Everyone exchanges concerned looks.

EIFFEL
Uhhh... Hera?

MINKOWSKI
Are you... ?

HERA
- any - any - any - an- AGHHH. Goddammit.

LOVELACE
Are you all right?

HERA
Fine, Captain. Just a small crash in my vocal program.

MINKOWSKI
Are you sure? Was the air cycling program - ?

HERA
(drop it)
Everything's **okay**, Lieutenant. Don't worry about it. It's just... slight malfunction. Happens in even the best systems.

MINKOWSKI
That's true, but... you *have* been pulling a lot of triple shifts lately, Hera.

JACOBI
When's the last time you did a full reset of your personality program?

HERA
... about seven months ago.

LOVELACE
Might not be a bad idea to do one in the next couple of days. If we ever manage to get out of here.

HERA
Uh... sure. We can - we can talk about that. Later. Now let's talk about something else. Please.

There now follows the second longest SILENCE in the history of Wolf 359.

Eiffel's STOMACH GROANS AGAIN.

EIFFEL
Kepler? Dare I ask if you have any other games?

KEPLER
Well... There *is* another game that might be fun. It's called Questions Only.

Jacobi GROANS, again.

JACOBI
No... anything but -

LOVELACE
Jesus, Jacobi. You look like you're in physical pain.

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, how does it work?

KEPLER
Can't you figure out how it works on your own?

MINKOWSKI
What... What do you mean?

KEPLER
What do you *think* I mean, Lieutenant?

MINKOWSKI
So... what? You can only ask questions? Is that the game?

KEPLER
Doesn't that sound reasonable?

MINKOWSKI
Well, I suppose. But wouldn't you - ?

JACOBI
Aaaand, you just lost.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, huh?

JACOBI
It's Questions Thunderdome: two men enter, one man leaves. All questions, all the time, or you lose, and someone gets to take your place against the defending champion.

KEPLER
Doesn't that sound like fun, Mr. Jacobi?

JACOBI
No, it **doesn't**.
(re: Kepler)
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
He is unnaturally good at this stupid game.

KEPLER
It's not that bad, is it?

JACOBI
Run away, little pigs. Run away while you still can.

KEPLER
So, who'd like to go first? Captain?

Lovelace kind of CHUCKLES: fuck it.

LOVELACE
You're pretty confident, aren't you?

KEPLER
Any reason I shouldn't be?

LOVELACE
Remind me: have any of your evil plans actually worked out well?

KEPLER
Do you really think you know about all of my plans?

LOVELACE
Feel like sharing any new ones?

KEPLER
You really think that's gonna work?

LOVELACE
Haven't we goaded you into making some pretty stupid mistakes?

JACOBI
Isn't she getting dangerously close to breaking "The Rules?"

LOVELACE
Quiet, you. Wait, no, hang on -

JACOBI
Oooh, sorry, Captain.

LOVELACE
Jacobi distracted me! That's cheating.

KEPLER
Would you like a rematch, Captain?

EIFFEL
Wait, wait. Let me give this a try.

KEPLER
You want to try, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Why not?

KEPLER
Let me know when you're ready?

EIFFEL
I'm ready.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Short and sweet.

KEPLER
Anyone else? Jacobi?

JACOBI
No thank you. I've lost enough of my life to this stupid game.

LOVELACE
What about you, Hera? You want to give this a try?

HERA
Well, wouldn't that be the next logical step?

KEPLER
Who said this was a logical game?

HERA
Don't you - ?

MINKOWSKI
Umm, wait. Are... are you sure that's a good idea, Hera? Can you do this *and* the reset of the oxygen cycle?

HERA
(lightning fast)
Don't you have complete confidence in my mechanical *and* multitasking abilities, Lieutenant?

MINKOWSKI
I... yes? of course?

HERA
Now, where were we?

KEPLER
How's your system functionality doing, Hera?

HERA
Do you still have any stiffness in what's left of your *hand*, Colonel?

Picking up speed...

KEPLER
Surely you out of everyone would know that's a temporary setback?

HERA
But why are you treating it like it's no setback at all?

KEPLER
Does that bother you?

LOVELACE
Hey, this is getting a -

HERA
Are we *ever* going to get some humility into that head of yours?

KEPLER
Is humility really what's most needed in our current situation?

Faster and faster...

HERA
How would you *define* our current situation?

KEPLER
Do you think that's a question I can answer by myself?

HERA
Isn't saying that you can do **anything** by yourself giving you too much credit?

EIFFEL
Umm... guys?

KEPLER
Isn't that getting a little personal?

HERA
Are you only equipped to deal with professional matters?

KEPLER
Is that a real question?

HERA
Is that an incredibly weak way to defend that?

JACOBI
Oh God... This is gonna take a while.

As Jacobi and Eiffel GROAN, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SECRET LAB - LATER

Everyone's still there. Kepler and Hera are still at it.

KEPLER
But *have* we proved our point?

GROANS from Jacobi, Eiffel, Lovelace, and Minkowski.

HERA
Shall we agree to disagree?

More GROANS.

KEPLER
What new subject would you like to pursue?

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, how long is this going to go on for?

JACOBI
Hours... days. *Months* doesn't seem unreasonable.

EIFFEL
Okay, I have an actual question.

KEPLER
Yes? What can I do for -?

EIFFEL
Not for you! Jacobi: how the hell did you end up here in the first place?

JACOBI
(stop me if I'm going too fast)
I got on a **spaceship**, Eiffel, and it flew all the way from Earth to -

EIFFEL
No, I - Look, it's just... We've had some time here, and I'm thinking it over, and you... kinda don't make sense.

LOVELACE
Rules...

EIFFEL
No, I don't mean it that way. You're like one-fifth sarcasm, one-fifth scary explosives knowledge, two-fifths loyalty, and one-fifth complete lack of moral compass.

JACOBI
You forgot one fifth dastardly good looks.

EIFFEL
So how did you end up that way? When did you realize Goddard was as messed up as they are? When were you *okay* with it?

BEAT. Jacobi stares at Eiffel, and then leans back against the wall, shrugging.

JACOBI
What makes you think I'd tell you?

EIFFEL
I don't know. Maybe you felt some lingering spark of desire to connect with someone like a human being.

Jacobi SNORTS: pass.

LOVELACE
Of course... there's also the possibility that Kepler doesn't want you talking about this stuff.

MINKOWSKI
And answering some of these questions would be just the stuff to really piss him off.

EIFFEL
And he doesn't have much of a way to stop you while he's living the Questions Life... does he?

KEPLER
(keep your mouth shut)
Jacobi...?

Jacobi holds Kepler's look for a moment. Then he smiles.

JACOBI
What would you like to know?

LOVELACE
How long have you been working for this clown?

JACOBI
I've been SI-5 for about six years. Worked under him most that time.

MINKOWSKI
And how did that happen?

JACOBI
Same way it happened for all us numbskulls: I got recruited.
(BEAT)
I wasn't in the best place when I joined. And they gave me work, gave me direction. And... well, by the time I had my feet on the ground again I'd found out what Goddard's like. I was already read in.

HERA
And you never wanted to walk away?

JACOBI
Never.

HERA
Why not?

JACOBI
Because I *loved* my job. Because I was *good* at it. Because the people I worked with were the best people I'd ever known.

EIFFEL
Yeah. I'm sure the team retreats where you got to burn down the rainforest were *amazing*.

BEAT. Jacobi shakes his head, then looks Eiffel up and down.

JACOBI
You ever hear of Bright Labs?

EIFFEL
What?

JACOBI
Bright Labs. Greentech Company, back in the early sixties. Had a funny idea: we might get electricity from the sun instead of from contaminating, *dangerous* fossil fuels. Crazy, right? Nobody wanted to give them a shot, except for this little tech conglomerate that was interested in energy sources for space flight operations. Forty years later: any of you all want to invest in coal?

EIFFEL
That's *one* good thing. That doesn't justify -

JACOBI
What about the investments in water purification? Eco-friendly fertilizers? Global internet access? Not to mention all of the dangerous jobs that are now done by Goddard-developed A.I. programs.

EIFFEL
That's... That doesn't -

JACOBI
See, that's the part of this you all don't want to ever talk about. Goddard's done some good stuff, and it's done some *deeply* messed up stuff, but that's not the point.

LOVELACE
What *is* the point?

JACOBI
Progress. And progress doesn't care about good, doesn't care about bad, it's just... *forward*. So why didn't I balk at all the harm Goddard's done? Why I am here?
(BEAT)
Because people like me - and people like *him* - make it possible for people like Maxwell to do their jobs. That's *always* how it works. And if I get to do what I love and blow stuff up along the way?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
And after everything they've done to you, are you still on their side?

Jacobi CHUCKLES.

JACOBI
There aren't sides. There are just people you'd do things *for* and people you'd do things *to*.

MINKOWSKI
I suppose what we're really wondering is if you'd...

JACOBI
Kill you?
(he smiles)
Man's gotta dream, right?

Everyone floats in silence for a moment.

EIFFEL
So... Anyone got another game?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
I think I have one. It's called, "Let's talk about what the Communications Officer has been doing by himself, why don't we?"

EIFFEL
I told you. I'm trying to see if I can get the comms system to -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... I know we said we would wait to talk about this, but I think we need to. What is this really about?

EIFFEL
(for the 47th time)
It's about us figuring out whatever the hell we need to do here so that we can go home.

HERA
But how does that translate into you barely speaking to anyone?

Eiffel GROANS in annoyance.

LOVELACE
Eiffel?

EIFFEL
I'm just trying to help, okay?

MINKOWSKI
Help?

EIFFEL
Listen... I know you guys think I'm insane, but I am at the end of my rope here. I'm out of ideas and I need to do *something*. So I'm doing what I know how to do, which is make radio equipment reach really, really far, okay?
(BEAT, he SIGHS)
I'm just trying to help the only way I still can.

HERA
What do you mean, "help the only way you still can?"

He opens and closes his mouth: how to put this?

EIFFEL
I - it's just - you all told me all that stuff I've been doing, how I've been behaving and - I mean, I'm grateful you told me. I'm glad I know, or I would've just kept... but I can't show up for breakfast like nothing happened, can I? I want to fix it. I want to make it right. And, it doesn't seem like you guys want me around that much right now, so...

He SIGHS, frustrated. Lovelace and Minkowski share a look.

LOVELACE
Oh, boy. Eiffel: there's no "making it right." Figuring out how to get the aliens to leave us alone would be *awesome*, but that's an unrelated problem.

EIFFEL
But -

LOVELACE
For this? There's just you - showing up for breakfast every day, and being slightly less of an idiot. There's just you, being our friend, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Am I, Captain? Am I your friend? After everything you said, I -

MINKOWSKI
After everything we said, you were going to feel a little bit hurt, yes. But then you pick yourself up, and you do *better*, Eiffel. If instead, you make the issue about *you* and how awkward and hurt *you* feel...

LOVELACE
Bad things, like poison gas leaks, start happening.

EIFFEL
So I'm not even doing *this* right?

Lovelace SIGHS.

LOVELACE
It's not a question of right.

MINKOWSKI
It's a question of you being as good a member of this crew as you can. You're always on the hook.

LOVELACE
But you're also always crew.

MINKOWSKI
So knock off the *Macgyver* bit, okay?

For the first time in this episode, Eiffel smiles.

EIFFEL
Roger that, Commander. Wilco.

MINKOWSKI
Good. You feeling any better?

Eiffel's STOMACH GROWLS AGAIN.

EIFFEL
Mostly still just hungry...

HERA
Um... would anyone like to change the topic? To things related to our current situation, gas-wise? And -

MINKOWSKI
Hera, whatever it is, just say it already. Drop the stupid game.

HERA
Do you really think I'm going to lose, Lieutenant? *After all this?*

MINKOWSKI
Oh for - Kepler: say something.

KEPLER
Something...?

MINKOWSKI
NOT LIKE THAT!

LOVELACE
All right, game over...

POW, Lovelace HITS Kepler in the arm!

KEPLER
OW!

LOVELACE
Well, look at that: an "Ow," in all its non-interrogatory, interjection-y glory. Congratulations, Hera - you win.

HERA
YES! Ahem. Anyway, update: venting's complete, and all air quality readings are officially in the green. It is now safe to move about the station.

Various CHEERS/HOORAYs/FINALLYs from everyone.

HERA (CONT'D)
And! Now that our airflow problem is fixed, I took the liberty of running some of the new hardware you've been building, Eiffel. And it's working *really* well.

EIFFEL
How well?

HERA
Let me turn on the speaker.

The speaker CRACKLES to life, and we hear a musical transmission: Debussy's REVERIE.

MINKOWSKI
Wow. Is that...?

HERA
A more direct line to our friends' music channel? Yeah.

EIFFEL
Are you're okay, Hera? It's not... messing with your systems at all?

HERA
No. I'm okay. And it's recording into the comms system, so if there's any useful information buried here, we'll be able to pull it out.

MINKOWSKI
That's great.

LOVELACE
Good work.

BEAT, as everyone takes a moments just listen to the music.

EIFFEL
Hey. I know I've said sorry a bunch, but I want to make sure I apologize for the things that matter. For shutting you out and getting tunnel-visioned, instead of being here. And thinking about how I can, you know, keep de-bugging my code..

LOVELACE
Fortunately? No lasting harm done.

MINKOWSKI
And fortunately, we were able to get through a crisis without trying to kill each other.

HERA
And fortunately, we might have some new data to work with.

EIFFEL
And fortunately - despite the aliens' Samurai Jacking our weekends, all the replicant lore, and the LexCorp plans for galactic domination - we'll get through whatever comes next.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Unfortunately, you'll also all blow up.

United, everyone else GROANS, and we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 52.

WOLF 359

"DIRTY WORK"

by

Emma Sherr-Ziarko

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1202 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 53.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MINKOWSKI'S QUARTERS - 1000 HOURS

Minkowski alone. Although we don't see it, she's going through some of her possessions: a diary, some old pictures.

She takes a DEEP, SHAKY BREATH, and -

MINKOWSKI
I need to tell you something.

We hear PAPERS RUSTLE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I haven't told anyone else. But...

She steadies herself, EXHALES.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
You were right. About everything. About the kind of person I am. That I...
(BEAT)
Even in that moment, I didn't mean to do it. I don't think I did. I just... the noise. The explosion. It was a reflex. I think it was.
(more to herself)
I think it was.
(BEAT)
I didn't want to kill her. I didn't want to kill her.

BEAT. She puts her face in her hands.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
It's perfect, right? I finally do something, and it's *because* I choked.

She LAUGHS bitterly into the empty space. But then... CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

HILBERT
Congratulations. Even though I am dead... you have *still* made me nauseous.

Hilbert's back - or, at least, back in Minkowski's head. He wears a look of profound impatience.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you.

HILBERT
You are wasting time with this whining.

MINKOWSKI
This isn't whining, it's -

HILBERT
Useless.

MINKOWSKI
Well, what should I do instead?!

For a moment Hilbert just paces around her. Then -

HILBERT
Do you remember the Riddle of the Orion? From training program?

MINKOWSKI
Do I - What does that have to do with any- ?

HILBERT
U.S. Orion. Espionage submarine, in Cold War. Posted deep in Arctic Sea when is discovered by enemy. Takes torpedo and begins to flood.

In middle of chaos, a young man. An ensign, on first assignment, standing by a hatch. Protocol dictates he should seal compartment, protect the ship.

MINKOWSKI
I know this just as well as -

HILBERT
Do you? Suddenly, a voice calls out from the water: "Officer! I am this ship's captain, and I order you to hold the hatch and help me."
But just a moment later, another voice -

MINKOWSKI
"Belay that order. I am this ship's intelligence expert. I am the only one that knows the enemy codes. Pull **me** up from the water."

HILBERT
The compartment is flooding, time is running out. What are the ensign's responsibilities?

MINKOWSKI
Should he follow orders, try to complete the mission, or protect his fellow crew members' lives?

BEAT.

HILBERT
Well? What did you answer when you went through training?

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
The Captain. I saved he should save the Captain.

HILBERT
And was that the... *correct* answer?

MINKOWSKI
There is no correct answer. It's just... to see what your priorities are. But it's like a rorschach - there's no **solution.**

HILBERT
But what is the lesson?

MINKOWSKI
No, that's not - it's just an illustration of how hard it is to -

HILBERT
What. Do. You. Learn?

MINKOWSKI
(huh?)
What do you mean?
(BEAT)
Hilbert? What do you -

BUZZ! The comms go off, making Minkowski jump about a foot.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
Minkowski? You there?

MINKOWSKI
(catching her breath)
Goddam - yes, yes, Captain. I'm here. What's up?

LOVELACE
We've got a situation with our Communications Officer. Can you meet me at the bridge?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir. On my way.
(lower)
I'm on my way.

And with that we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1015 HOURS

A very tired, very frustrated Lovelace leans over a console.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, I swear to God... if you make me go out there to get you...

EIFFEL
(over the comms)
I'm almost done. You're gonna thank me once all this is set, Captain.

LOVELACE
That's not - ughhh.

Behind her, a DOOR OPENS as Minkowski enters.

MINKOWSKI
Captain.

LOVELACE
Minkowski, you - whoa. Are you okay?

MINKOWSKI
(dry)
Fine, thanks. What's going on?

LOVELACE
Your communications officer -

MINKOWSKI
You mean *our* communications officer.

LOVELACE
I mean the soon to be ex communications officer.

EIFFEL
I am so close to getting this right, you guys!

HERA
For the record? He's been saying that for the past three hours.

EIFFEL
Twenty-third time's the charm!

MINKOWSKI
What are you even trying to do?

EIFFEL
Adjusting our Dish TV. After all the internal adjustments I've made, I just need to rejigger the external components a bit. Then we'll be on our way to some sweet, sweet W, W, E.T. Monday night specials!

MINKOWSKI
And what does that mean *in English*?

LOVELACE
Oh, something or other about picking up alien signals.

EIFFEL
Which might be our best bet on figuring out how to get outta here!

LOVELACE
And no one's disputing the theoretical merits of that, but why do you need to be doing it *now*?!

EIFFEL
Because we've been picking up an intermittent transmission for the past five hours! There's signal gold in them thar hills!

LOVELACE
And that would be great, but... Hera's about to go through her *previously scheduled* internal reset, remember?

HERA
You're gonna be on auto-pilot for the next three hours.

EIFFEL
Hera, aren't *you* the auto-pilot?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Eiffel? You wanna maybe think that through for a sec?

EIFFEL
Was that one of the questions I'm trying to not ask so often?

HERA
Little bit, yeah.

EIFFEL
Uh... Sorry? The auto-pilot is...?

HERA
(very pointed)
The auto-pilot keeps the station system running and *somewhat* functional. As the Mother Program, I run, debug, and fine-tune a series of complicated, interlocking systems, including...

EIFFEL
The auto-pilot?

HERA
Good boy.

EIFFEL
Okay. One: sorry. Two: I know you all think I'm about as qualified as a slightly above-average chimpanzee. But on this rare occasion, I *know* what I'm doing. And I've taken, like, *so* many precautions! I've got air for *days*, and my mag boots still have fifty percent of their battery. That's, like, so many percents!

HERA
(dryly)
Yes. Exactly half of the percents.

LOVELACE
We're not having you out there without backup! What if - ?

But just then, the speakers PICK UP traces of the aforementioned transmission. It's there and gone in a flash.

EIFFEL
See?!? We've got a live one here.

LOVELACE
Minkowski, would you please do something?

MINKOWSKI
Something like... what exactly?

LOVELACE
Like getting him to do what he's told?

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, which part of... every nanosecond we've known each other makes you think I have that power?

LOVELACE
Ughhh... Hera?

HERA
How about this: your mag boots get below twenty-five percent power and I'm still offline, you abort and come back inside.

EIFFEL
Yeah! Sure! That's plenty of time.

LOVELACE
AND you stay in contact with us for the entire procedure, okay?

EIFFEL
Totally fair demands.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Fine. Get back to work, then, Eiffel. Double-time it.

EIFFEL
Yes! Booyah! Uh, I mean, sir, yes, sir. No time to lose, sir.

MINKOWSKI
Great.

And on that dignified and hopeful note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - JACOBI'S CELL - 1030 HOURS

Jacobi, alone. There's an occasional CRACKLE OF STATIC coming from the PA system.

JACOBI
(deadpan)
Three bottles of beer on the wall, three bottles of beer, take one down pass it around, two bottles of beer on the wall. Two bottles of -

From overhead, the PA CHIMES.

HERA
Attention, everyone:

We can still hear Jacobi continuing to mutter the song.

HERA (CONT'D)
I am about to perform an internal reset of my processor, and will be inactive for the next three hours. The backup autopilot program will engage, although most essential station functions will be on manual. Make any necessary adjustments, and don't do anything <u>stupid</u>. Thank you.

With another CHIME, the PA CLOSES.

JACOBI
(deadpan)
No bottles of beer on the wall, no bottles of beer... go to the store, buy some more -
(cracking his neck)
- ninety-nine bottles of beer on the wall.

Through the walls, we hear MACHINERY TURNING...

JACOBI (CONT'D)
All right... time's up.

There's a SOFT WOOSH! and suddenly, next to him -

MAXWELL
You know what to do.

JACOBI
You definitely explained it enough times.

MAXWELL
Auto-pilot program's less complex. More suggestible. It won't give you much trouble, at least until Hera comes back online in three hours.

JACOBI
Oh, that should be **plenty** of time.

MAXWELL
Here we go...

Through the wall: a LARGE PROCESSOR SHUTS DOWN.

HERA
(auto-pilot voice)
Autopilot Function Engaged.

MAXWELL
You ready to be a bad guy again?

JACOBI
Hell... it's about time.

And off of that ominous note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - THE BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Lovelace and Minkowski listen as Eiffel works.

LOVELACE
How you doing out there, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(deadpan)
Awful. Everything is catastrophic.

MINKOWSKI
What?!

EIFFEL
Everything is fine. Nothing has changed in the 100 seconds since the last time you asked.

LOVELACE
I'm gonna ask again in 100 seconds, so chop-chop. And we're officially on auto, so watch your levels.

Eiffel GROANS, annoyed, but continues working.

EIFFEL
Aye-aye, sir.

And right on cue - Eiffel gets the receiver in precisely the right position and the radio springs to life.

We hear Mikhail Glinka's *OVERTURE TO RUSLAN AND LUDMILLA.*

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Awww, yeah! Who's the man?

MINKOWSKI
Nicely done. **Now get back inside.**

EIFFEL
No, I think I'd like to hear the words: whom amongst us is the man?

LOVELACE
Someone amongst us is about to lose the things that *make him a man* if he doesn't shut up and head for the nearest airlock.

EIFFEL
(mock ATC voice)
Control tower, Echo-India-Foxtrot here.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We copy your horrifying threat of bodily mutilation - now shutting up and heading for the nearest airlock.

LOVELACE
Thank you.

There's a WHIP! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS - JACOBI'S CELL - 1030 HOURS

The musical transmission continues playing, with a different sound quality as it goes through different speakers. Jacobi approaches the door to his cell, looks up.

JACOBI
(clears throat)
Hello, Hephaestus auto-pilot.

HERA
(auto-pilot voice)
You are not authorized.

Behind Jacobi Maxwell SNORTS: *that's adorable.*

HERA (CONT'D)
Only authorized personnel may -

JACOBI
Yes, yes, how nice. Antikythera protocol. Antikythera protocol. Voice override authentication: Helo-Alpha-Romeo-Tango.

HERA
You are not authorized. Only au-

But suddenly, the auto-pilot voice FREEZES. After a moment -

HERA (CONT'D)
Override authentication valid.

MAXWELL
That's better.

HERA
Which program would you like to access?

JACOBI
Access master index. Verification code: Whiskey-Oscar-Lima-Foxtrot-Romeo-Alpha-Mike.

HERA
Verification accepted. Which system would like to access?

MAXWELL
What do you think? Where to start?

JACOBI
Choices, choices... Let's do... *communications*. Terminate all open comms channels.

And with another WHIP! we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SIGNAL ARRAY - MEANWHILE

Eiffel closing up the signal array panel. There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC as the comms line closes.

EIFFEL
Guys, how're the radiation peaks on this transmission looking? Anything too concerning?
(no response)
Guys? Guys?
(BEAT)
Hello?

And with another WHIP! we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS - JACOBI'S CELL - 1030 HOURS

The music continues to build as -

MAXWELL
So far, so good...

JACOBI
Now... Let's get their attention. Access electrical. Shut down power grids... four through thirteen.

As machinery begins to churn, there's another WHIP! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - THE BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Lovelace and Minkowski, staring at monitors on the bridge.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, return to airlock five. We have lost contact with you. Return to airlock five.
(no response)
Goddammit...

LOVELACE
I knew it. What happens if we lose communications with him, I said. This is a terrible idea, I said. Wanna rock-paper-scissors for who goes out there and rescues his ass?

MINKOWSKI
Lets give it another two minutes. All of his systems are still in the green. He might just be -

BWWWWWAAAAAMP! At that moment, the room around them LOSES POWER. Lights switch off, machines grind to a halt.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
What the - ?

LOVELACE
Why did the power just go off?

A SHORT KLAXON, then a DIFFERENT SET OF LIGHTS TURN ON.

MINKOWSKI
That's the auxiliary power system...

LOVELACE
Hephaestus, what is going on?

HERA
Power Grid Four shutdown complete.

LOVELACE
Why are - no, cancel. Abort sequence.

HERA
Unable to comply - command override is in effect. Beginning shut down of power grid number five.

MINKOWSKI
The hell is happening?

LOVELACE
What's number five connected to?

You have to ask? With another WHIP! we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - SIGNAL ARRAY - MEANWHILE

Back to Eiffel, still trying to reconnect with the bridge.

EIFFEL
Uh guys? Is this a joke? Because it's... kinda funny but - Aaaaagh!

BWWWAMMMM! A METAL GROAN runs over the station's hull. There's the CRACKLE of Eiffel's magnetic boots going dead.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hephaestus! Something's - I've got some sort of mag boot failure here. I'm off structure! I repeat: I'm off structure! I would really like to be *on* the structure, so, HELP?!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS - JACOBI'S CELL - 1030 HOURS

As the music rises towards its final peak -

JACOBI
(mock conducting)
Good, good... Faster! Allegro!

MAXWELL
Concentrate... bring it in for the big finish.

JACOBI
Auto: Run demolitions protocol A four stroke M.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - THE BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

A alarm BLASTS, as the MUSICAL TRANSMISSION CONCLUDES.

HERA
Warning. Warning. Radiological alert.

MINKOWSKI
Oh no...

HERA
Explosive charge detected in the engineering section.

LOVELACE
What the hell is going?

JACOBI
(over comms)
Haven't you figured it out?

Lovelace and Minkowski exchange startled looks.

MINKOWSKI
Ja - Jacobi?

JACOBI
The one and only.

LOVELACE
How are - **what are you doing?**

JACOBI
Oh, just your standard, everyday counter-coup. Now, I may not be as smart as my late colleague, but she did teach me a couple of neat tricks you can do with an auto-pilot program. For the next three hours, the Hephaestus is mine.

LOVELACE
(low, to herself)
Oh for - this *has got* to be a joke...

JACOBI
Not today, Captain. Now, five months ago I installed an explosive in the number one engine, just in case.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
My new friend Auto has just *armed* this device, and I will use it to make us all go the way of the Plant Monster if I see a *single* thing I don't like. **Am I understood?**

BEAT. The two women exchange looks, but finally -

MINKOWSKI
What do you want, Jacobi?

JACOBI
Let's start simple. Lieutenant Minkowski, would you be so kind as to join me in my office? Oh, and bring bring Kepler with you.

LOVELACE
Uh-uh. Not gonna ha -

JACOBI
If I don't have both Lieutenant Minkowski and Colonel Kepler with me in the next ten minutes, *everyone goes boom*.
(BEAT)
Captain, you just sit tight for now. And don't get any funny ideas about trying to mess with the bomb. Not the day to be a hero.
(BEAT)
See you in five, Lieutenant.

BUZZ! Instantly both women are all business.

LOVELACE
Okay. Plan.

MINKOWSKI
I'll go. Grab Kepler on way up. Worst case, at least I'll see what the hell he wants.

LOVELACE
Best case, you'll be able to keep him distracted long enough for me to take apart this bomb.

MINKOWSKI
Engineering?

LOVELACE
Already on my way.

MINKOWSKI
Be careful.

LOVELACE
You too.

And as they move off in their separate directions, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - JACOBI'S CELL - 5 MINUTES LATER

SLAM! Minkowski throws the door OPEN, Kepler in tow. She PUSHES him in, roughly, and stands in the doorway.

MINKOWSKI
All right. We're here. What do you want?

JACOBI
Why don't you come in, Lieutenant? Have a seat? How's your day going?

MINKOWSKI
Cut the crap, Jacobi.

KEPLER
Come on, Minkowski. You didn't really think we were just going to sit here forever, did you?

MINKOWSKI
I'm sure you had it all figured out.

KEPLER
First rule of project management: always have a back up plan. Children get riled up and start causing trouble? Have one person take the blame, say the mean things. Meanwhile, the poor, *betrayed* little guy gets a bit more leeway - just enough to sneak up and hit you from behind.
(BEAT)
You really think this was the first time someone got a play past us? That we wouldn't work out contingencies *months* in advance? You are out of your depth, kid.

Minkowski grinds her teeth. Behind her, Jacobi stares at Kepler.

MINKOWSKI
You done, Colonel?

KEPLER
Oh, I think we're just getting started. Isn't that right, Mr. Jacobi?

Instead of answering, Jacobi stares at Kepler for a BEAT.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Jacobi?

Finally, Jacobi turns back to Minkowski.

JACOBI
You're armed, aren't you, Lieutenant?

MINKOWSKI
(tightly)
Yes.

KEPLER
Good catch, good catch.

JACOBI
Unholster your weapon, Minkowski. Slowly.

We hear a CLICK as she undoes the holster, removes her gun.

JACOBI (CONT’D)
Good. Now shoot him.

Um, what? Did we hear that right?

MINKOWSKI
What? *What did you just say?*

JACOBI
Is there a problem? Oh, excuse me, I forgot the magic word.
(clears throat)
My Dearest Lieutenant Minkowski, if it's not too much trouble would you - pretty please, with sugar on top - shoot Colonel Kepler dead where he stands?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - 100 YARDS AWAY FROM THE HEPHAESTUS - MEANWHILE

Eiffel floats for a BEAT, looking around.

EIFFEL
(SIGH)
Let's try this one more time.

He CLICKS ON his radio.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Come in, Hephaestus. Come in, Hephaestus. I am approximately one hundred yards away from the station, drifting slowly. Do you copy?
(no answer)
Lovelace, Minkowski, Hera, do *any* of you copy?
(no answer)
Guys? Is this an elaborate prank to teach me a very important lesson?
(no answer)
Yeah. Figures.

He CLICKS OFF the radio. SIGHS again. EIFFEL GROANS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
UGGGGH! This is ridiculous! I don't even have a recorder to log the -
(something strikes him)
Huh. That's an idea.

He CLICKS ON the radio.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hello, hello, hello, Dear Listeners F.M.! Big fan, long-time caller, have *so many* opinions on this whole blue period thing you're into!

No response, STATIC CRACKLES weakly in the background.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And, um, I kinda have some transportation issues I'd love your help with. Maybe yes?
(no answer)
Maybe no. Of course not.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Why would you do anything that counts as *actually useful?* Aside from scaring the bejesus out of us, basically all you've done is try to get us to...
(holy shit)
... to go into the star...

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. USS HEPHAESTUS STATION - JACOBI'S CELL - MEANWHILE

Minkowski and Kepler stare at Jacobi, still shell shocked. Jacobi, on the other hand, is disturbingly calm.

JACOBI
C'mon. It's not very complicated, Lieutenant. I would like you to point your firearm between Colonel Kepler's eyes, pull the trigger, and blow his brains out.

KEPLER
Jacobi... where are you going with this?

Jacobi LAUGHS.

JACOBI
You know what? Your face right now almost makes it all worth it.

KEPLER
This isn't the plan.

JACOBI
No. It's not... *your* plan.

Kepler's face is rapidly losing color. This is maybe the most unnerved he's been in the series to date.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, I think you need to take a deep breath, and really think -

JACOBI
Oh, I *have* thought about this. And at the end of the day? He was the one that put her in the line of fire. So he has to pay.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
And the way I see it? You should be the one that collects.

Kepler LAUGHS.

KEPLER
Oh, you complete and utter idiot. After everything you've seen, you're still not over -

BAM! PUNCH! Kepler audibly WINCES in pain.

JACOBI
Yes, Colonel. I'm going through a bit of an unconventional grieving process. But guess what: I'm about to have a breakthrough! And the Lieutenant here is going to help me with that.

MINKOWSKI
(slow, careful)
Jacobi... no. This is... not how you want to do this.

JACOBI
No? Seems pretty fair to me. Massive head trauma for massive head trauma. He's got that much coming, and I think it's only right that you get the honors.

MINKOWSKI
It's not an ho -
(slow, clear:)
I don't want to kill anyone.

JACOBI
Number one? Else. You don't want to kill anyone **else**. Number two? Yeah: *no duh*. That's where the whole vengeance aspect comes into play. You *did* pull the trigger. This is kind of a two-birds-one-bullet sort of adventure.

MINKOWSKI
No. I'm not doing this. Do your own dirty work.

Jacobi meets her gaze. BEAT. Then -

JACOBI
Auto-pilot! Advance detonation setting by one.

WAAA! WAA! There's two blares from the KLAXON.

HERA
Auto-detonation sequence advanced from five to four.

JACOBI
I assume I don't need to explain what happens when it gets to zero?

Kepler and Minkowski exchange worried - spooked - looks.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
I don't know if I have expressed myself properly, so let me clarify some of the finer points here:
(at Kepler)
For you, Colonel... this is it. Because either she shoots you, or I kill *everyone*.
(turns to Minkowski)
And for you, Lieutenant: he's dead. This isn't a choice between killing him or not. This is about whether you're going to save everyone else on this station. Unless, of course, you don't want to get your hands dirty. **Er**.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, stop.

JACOBI
Tell you what: I'll be *generous*. You can have ten minutes to make up your mind. Open the door.

She moves to the door, OPENS IT.

MINKOWSKI
Where are you going?

JACOBI
There's a phone call I need to make. You just... hang out. Mull things over. Be right back.

With that he SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT. Minkowski turns to Kepler.

MINKOWSKI
Colonel, if this is some kind of... weird evil trick, now would be a really good time to tell me.
(BEAT)
Okay, not an evil trick. Good to know...

KEPLER
Lieutenant, please tell me <u>you</u> have a back up plan here.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING SECTION - MEANWHILE

A METAL PANEL SLIDES OPEN. Lovelace pears into the engine.

LOVELACE
(low to herself)
This... doesn't make any sense...

She OPENS ANOTHER PANEL.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Where the hell is this thing?

ANOTHER PANEL.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Something with radiological charge shouldn't be hard to...
(a thought occurs)
... unless... oh goddammit.

She pulls herself out of the engine, propels herself at the comms pannel. HITS IT - BUZZ!

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Minkowski! Whatever you're doing, **stop**! There's no bomb!

But instead of Minkowski on the comms, she gets -

CLAP. CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

JACOBI
Very clever, Captain. I had a feeling <u>you'd</u> figure it out.

LOVELACE
Jacobi, what are you - ?

JACOBI
Although, how could you possibly know that unless - *hey!* You didn't go down to engineering, did you? That's the one thing I told you not to do.

Lovelace shuts her eyes, frustrated, realizing:

LOVELACE
I'm stuck here, aren't I?

JACOBI
Auto ran a lockdown protocol the second the door closed behind you.

LOVELACE
And there's no bomb, is there?

JACOBI
What are you, nuts? You think I'm gonna leave an atomic engine wired up to a bomb *for months*? That stuff's <u>dangerous</u>.
(BEAT)
Nah. Why would I do that when I can just go, "Hey Auto? Repeat after me: radiological alert, radiological alert."

HERA
Radiological alert, radiological alert.

LOVELACE
The hell are you trying to do?

JACOBI
(a bit softer)
Nothing that concerns you, Captain. You've been through plenty. Just sit tight... it'll all be over soon.

And as the comms line closes with a BUZZ, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - 160 YARDS AWAY FROM THE HEPHAESTUS - 0750 HOURS

Eiffel, still drifting, having a conversation with himself.

EIFFEL
So let's... let's think about this for a sec, my long, **long** distance pen pals. When the star went blue, it was like we were being sucked in. And you all said it was a <u>process</u>. Which we all agreed would kill us, just...
(realization in progress)
... the way it killed the original Captain Lovelace...
(BEAT, thinks)
"The ***door*** won't stay open forever."
<u>Wolf 359</u> is a... (he finally gets it)
Nooooooo. No, no, no, no, no. Nope.
(BEAT)
There's no way. Just look at it! It's a friggin' giant blue star!
(mock alien voice)
NOT ALL IS AS IT APPEARS, DOUGLAS. THAT'S NO MOON.
(normal voice)
Yeah, but even *if*. Even if it's actually a door, there's only one way to find out. And being wrong involves burning alive. A lot.
(mock alien voice)
ONLY THE PENITENT DUDE SHALL PASS. YOU SHALL PROVE YOUR GROOVITUDE IN THE LEAP FROM -
(normal voice)
Oh, God. It’s a leap of faith, isn’t it?
(BEAT, smaller)
Why couldn't it be snakes?

On that excellent question, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - JACOBI'S CELL - MEANWHILE

Minkowski paces, Kepler broods in a corner.

KEPLER
How could he?

MINKOWSKI
Not helping...

KEPLER
After everything we've been -

Minkowski SLAPS HIM.

MINKOWSKI
I said **not helping**! Colonel: I really don't want to shoot you, so I need you to concentrate. Will he blow us up?

There's a BEAT - then slowly, Kepler starts to NOD.

KEPLER
He'll do it.

MINKOWSKI
Can you override his override?

KEPLER
No. He and Maxwell handled that. I trusted them. I trusted *him*...

MINKOWSKI
Focus.
(BREATH)
I have a feeling that if Lovelace had been able to disarm the bomb we would have heard by now. As much as I don't want to, I'm starting to consider Plan C.

KEPLER
What's Plan -

MINKOWSKI
I do *exactly* what Jacobi says and I shoot you in the face.

KEPLER
You said you wouldn't kill me.

MINKOWSKI
I said I didn't want to. Tell me you have another option.

KEPLER
I do. But you're not gonna like it.

She looks at him: *well?*

KEPLER (CONT'D)
You take that gun there... and as soon as Jacobi walks through that door there... you point it in his face and you pull that trigger there.

MINKOWSKI
(Jesusz)
Kepler... I'm not killing Jacobi.

KEPLER
Someone's going to die, it's just a matter of who. Which one of us is *actually* putting your station in danger?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, *now* it's my station?

KEPLER
You remember the Riddle of the Orion?

MINKOWSKI
What?

KEPLER
From training? Two officers, one ensign, in the sinking sub? What do you do? What's your *responsibility*?

MINKOWSKI
What?

But at that moment - the DOOR SWINGS OPEN as Jacobi ENTERS.

JACOBI
All right losers! It's make-your-mind-up-time! Are we doing this? Or do the aliens get to watch some kickass fireworks?

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, what did you say?

JACOBI
Oh for God's - what *lies* are you telling her now?

KEPLER
I said -

POW! Jacobi's just DECKED HIM in the face.

JACOBI
For once in your life, *shut up*.
(to Minkowski)
Well? What's it gonna be?
(no answer)
Okay. Auto: advance detonation setting by one.

WAAA! WAA! There's two blares from the KLAXON.

HERA
Auto-detonation sequence advanced from four to three.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi... stop. I get it. You're hurt. We all are. But you don't have to kill all of us.

JACOBI
I'm not killing anyone, Minkowski. You, on the other hand, are going to kill either Kepler, or all of us. Your choice.

MINKOWSKI
That's not a choice!

JACOBI
It is. Between one and six.

MINKOWSKI
Christ! You want to see how demented you sound?

She OPENS THE CHAMBER of her gun. We hear BULLETS CLINK as she takes them out. She deftly SPINS THE CHAMBER.

KA-CHUNK! She's COCKED THE GUN. RAISING IT STRAIGHT AHEAD.

JACOBI
Okay. That *is* different. Why is the gun pointed *at me*?

INKOWSKI
To make a point. One bullet. Six rounds in a chamber. Didn't quite see where the bullet landed, so we're about to go on a ride. I'm going to ask you to turn off the bomb. Every time you say, "No," I'm going to pull the trigger.
(MORE)

INKOWSKI (CONT'D)
And if *in the course of events* you just <u>happen</u> to get shot, well, that'll be <u>your choice</u>, won't it?

JACOBI
This isn't funny.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, you think it isn't funny now? Just watch: Hey Jacobi? Turn off the bomb.

JACOBI
No.

She PULLS THE TRIGGER. CLICK. Empty round.

MINKOWSKI
Do I have your attention now?

JACOBI
Enough. You are going to point that gun at Kepler or -

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi, would you *please* -

JACOBI
(louder)
- or I am going to blow us all to Kingdom Come!

MINKOWSKI
Turn off that -

JACOBI
NO!

She PULLS THE TRIGGER. CLICK. Empty round.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Auto: advance detonation setting!

WAAA! WAA! There's two blares from the KLAXON.

HERA
Auto-detonation sequence advanced from three to two.

KEPLER
This is crazy...

MINKOWSKI
Yes! Thank you!
(back to Jacobi)
You see? He gets it. It's not too late to change your mind.

JACOBI
After everything he did? After everything you did? No. You're both gonna pay.

MINKOWSKI
AND THEN WHAT? Who pays for this? Who owns up for *this* murder? And for the one after this one? Whose responsibility is it?

JACOBI
Problem for another day!

MINKOWSKI
It doesn't have to be if you **change your mind.**

JACOBI
No.

She PULLS THE TRIGGER. CLICK. Empty round. That's three.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Auto! Up the sequence.

WAAA! WAA! There's two blares from the KLAXON.

HERA
Auto-detonation sequence advanced from three to two.

MINKOWSKI
You think I don't get it? How betrayed you feel? By him? By **me**? How sad you are? How *unbelievably angry*? Well guess what, I'm right there with you. Hilbert's dead. Who do I get revenge on?

JACOBI
Him.

MINKOWSKI
He didn't set the bomb! And for that matter, he didn't choose to not back down! To push!
(BEAT)
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I get it. I was there with you. I know who you're angry at, and it's not me, and it's not him. It's you. Because you could have backed down, but you didn't. You made a call and people died. We both did. We pulled one trigger but we killed two people. And that's eating you up inside.

JACOBI
Auto! Up the sequence.

WAAA! WAA! There's two blares from the KLAXON.

HERA
Auto-detonation sequence advanced from two to one.

MINKOWKI
Listen to me -

JACOBI
No.

She PULLS THE TRIGGER. CLICK. Empty round.

MINKOWSKI
LISTEN TO ME!
(HALF-BEAT)
We killed them. Whatever they did, whatever orders he gave... we did it.
(BEAT)
That's what the riddle teaches you. However you make the choice, **you** still make the choice. And whatever you tell yourself, the blood is still on your hands.

JACOBI
So what?!? We're just supposed to do nothing about it?!

MINKOWSKI
No, but you know what doesn't help?! MORE BLOOD!
(lower)
I don't know how to fix this. I don't know if it's a thing we can even fix. But if we keep pretending it's out of our hands, we *will* end up killing each other, and everyone else. And that won't help.

JACOBI
What will?

MINKOWSKI
I dunno. But between the two of us? There's gotta be at least a small chance we figure it out, right?

There’s a LONG BEAT. And then, finally -

JACOBI
(quiet, voice shaking a little)
Twenty bucks says I figure it out first.

Minkowski SMILES, weakly.

MINKOWSKI
You're on.

He lets out a DEEP, SHAKY BREATH. Then he walks to the comms and presses the button.

JACOBI
Antikythera protocol. Antikythera protocol. Passcode: Alpha Lima Alpha November Alpha. Kill override program.

HERA
Override program terminated.

Sound of the autopilot POWERING UP.

HERA (CONT’D)
Auto-pilot returning to default mode.

Minkowski and Jacobi look at each other: haunted, exhausted.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you.

JACOBI
Well. You know.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. I really, really do.

JACOBI
Did you... have a bullet in that gun?

Minkowski PULLS THE TRIGGER TWICE. CLICK. CLICK.

MINKOWSKI
I think the point still stands, though.
(then:)
You... **did** set a bomb, right?

Jacobi just stares at her. After a BEAT - Minkowksi LAUGHS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(low, to herself)
Oh goddammit...

KEPLER
Um... Could I just say that -

MINKOWSKI
No.

JACOBI
No.

They look at each other, and both SIGH WEARILY.

MINKOWSKI
Come on, Colonel. Let's find somewhere *really* uncomfortable to throw you.

And with that settled, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATIONS - THE BRIDGE - TWO HOURS

Minkowski alone. We sit with her in silence for a moment.

MINKOWSKI
You were right. I don't know if it's any satisfaction to you, but you were right. I don't think... I *hope* I won't need any more lessons.
(BEAT, quietly)
Spasibo.

BEAT.

Then, a DOOR OPENS. Minkowski looks towards it.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Captain.

LOVELACE
Knock, knock.

MINKOWSKI
Are you just getting out of engineering?

LOVELACE
It took me a while to figure out how to get the door unbolted, even once the override was gone.

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Sorry I wasn't more -

LOVELACE
Dude, you handled the crazy-ass hostage situation. So not complaining.
(BEAT)
You all right?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah. I think so.

LOVELACE
That was very convincing.

MINKOWSKI
Okay...

LOVELACE
I'm sure the Academy will be getting in touch any -

MINKOWSKI
Okay, okay!
(BEAT, she SIGHS)
It's just... there's been all these times when somebody put me in situation where I was "in charge," but I wasn't... in control. I can't think of a decision in my life that wasn't already determined by someone else. But... even then, there was always a choice. I always made it. Even when I didn't realize I was making it.
(BEAT)
So now... I think I need to make choices by myself. For myself.

LOVELACE
Aaaaand does that mean you're perhaps ready to take command of a certain space station again?

MINKOWSKI
No.

LOVELACE
No?

MINKOWSKI
No. Because I've never been in command, I can't *retake* it. But, if you'll allow me, sir, I would be honored to relieve you of your duties, and assume command of the U.S.S. Hephaestus Station.

Lovelace SMILES, and salutes Minkowski.

LOVELACE
About friggin' time, sir.

There's a CRACKLE on the PA and the sound of BOOTING UP.

HERA
Ahhh. There. Hello, all! That's the full reboot cycle, concluded as of... now. I've taken control of all functions, and everything on the station appears nominal.

MINKOWSKI
Good to have you back, Hera.

HERA
Did I miss anything fun?

LOVELACE
Oh, not too much Hera. Just -

HERA
OH MY GOD WHAT IS HE DOING????

MINKOWSKI
Hera?! Problem?

HERA
Lieutenant, Eiffel is headed towards the Red Line!

LOVELACE
I *knew* we were forgetting something!

Minkowski jumps to the comms.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel! Eiffel, are you there?

EIFFEL
(startled)
Minkowski? Oh my God, you're back!Listen, I've figured it out.

MINKOWSKI
You've figured what out?

EIFFEL
The aliens. What they want.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, what -

EIFFEL
I know it sounds crazy, but I need you to trust me. I know what I'm doing. Or, I think I know what I'm doing. Either way, I'm doing it.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, what are you talking about?

EIFFEL
Commander. Will you... if it doesn't work - or hell, maybe even it does - tell everyone back home that... I dunno, all the stuff you tell people back home?

MINKOWSKI
I... sure, but...

EIFFEL
I don't know what's gonna happen, but I-

Just then, however, the COMMS CUT OUT into STATIC.

HERA
Commander... He's... He's headed towards the star.

MINKOWSKI
Goddammit, Eiffel.

And on that note we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

WOLF 359

"THE WATCHTOWER"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1202 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 54.

BEGIN RECORDING:

EXT. SPACE - 1430 HOURS

Eiffel floats by himself, in a space suit. Behind him, rapidly disappearing from view as it barrels down its orbit, is the U.S.S. Hephaestus.

In front of him, enormous, all-consuming, is Wolf 359.

Through the helmet comms we hear Eiffel HUMMING TO HIMSELF.

EIFFEL
(low, to himself)
You should see me dance the polka... you should see me cover the ground..
(hums for a moment, then:)
When the band commences playing... my feet begin to go...

There's a BEEP from his suit. He glances down.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Forty-five minutes of oxygen left on this bad boy...
(louder, to the space around him)
If anything's gonna happen here, *nowish* would be a really good time.

Monstrous, total silence is the only response he gets.

BEAT.

Then he HITS another BUTTON. There's a BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey Hera? Can you hear me? You guys there?

Once again, silence is the only answer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No, of course not.

BEAT. He floats, drifting towards the star.

Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, listen: I'm going pretty stir crazy on this here slow not-so-pleasure cruise so... I'm gonna keep transmitting, okay? Just on the off-chance that you *are* receiving me, and I just can't hear your replies.

He CLEARS HIS THROAT, looks around -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm, uh, still drifting towards Wolf 359. This sucker's got quite the current. I'm caught in the undertow now, I guess.

He taps another sensor on his suit. It CHIRPS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Sensors show I'm about three clicks past Minkowski's red line now, so... not exactly much of a chance to go back now. We're doing this.
(lower)
We're doing this...
(normal voice)
You know, I... I, uh, never really stopped to appreciate how beautiful this... big blue thing really is. It's... it's really something.
(BEAT, then:)
Pretty soon it's gonna blind me and sear all the flesh off my bones, isn't it, Hera?
(BEAT)
Oh yeah. Pretty soon this is gonna get really gruesome and -

We hear it in the distance, faint: BOOM. Like an EXPLOSION.

Eiffel sees it. Stops dead mid-sentence.

After a moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... Hera? There seems to be something happening... *to* the star? *On* the star? If I didn't know any better I'd say that something is coming out of - yeah, no, no, that's definitely what's happening.

Faint, far away: a DULL ROAR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm, not really sure how to explain this, but it's almost like the star's... like, a part of it's kind of reaching out?

Barely noticeable, but growing louder: an APPROACHING RUSH. Like the din of an oncoming wave.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... it kinda looks like it's...

Getting louder...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(growing panic)
Uh, no, scratch my last, it's *definitely* coming this way and -

Getting LOUDER...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(full on panic)
Holy crap, that's getting **really fast**, and I think it's coming straight at me!

LOUDER! RIGHT ON TOP OF US!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
HERA! WHAT THE HELL IS - ?!

KABOOM! The approaching thing HITS, and the resulting impact is DEFEANING.

But - somehow, **miraculously** - Eiffel isn't immediately obliterated. Instead, he falls, and we fall with him, into -

INT/EXT. WORMHOLE - CONTINUOUS

EIFFEL
(voice shaking badly)
AAAAAAAHHHHHH!

Eiffel is PLUMMETING down, going at a BREAKNECK SPEED.

Around him is something beyond his comprehension. A tunnel, twisting, shifting, changing, living, breathing, made entirely out of light. It kinda looks like he's plunging towards the center of the Earth, yet ahead of him awaits a blindingly bright blast of light.

Of course, we don't see any of this on the radio. We just **hear it**, and it sounds *terrifying*. It is the sound of vertigo incarnate: ever quickening free-fall as the world - possibly the worlds, possibly the galaxies - whizz past us.

Communications Officer Doug Eiffel falls face-first. In his mind, about to die as he lived:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AHHHHHHHH!!!!

... screaming for his life.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh God!!!
(with great difficulty)
Hera? Do you read me? I'm gonna... keep transmitting for as long as I can...

WHHHHUMMMM!!! Something ENORMOUS - like JUPITER-SIZED - just flew past him. He CLENCHES HIS TEETH.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I'm... falling. The star did... *something* and now I'm in a... a tunnel! A tunnel of some sort! I can't see where we're going but -

ZHOOOOM!!! ANOTHER ENORMOUS OBJECT FLEW BY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
We're going **fast**! We're going so fast! And we're headed towards... *something*? It's... bright light... and I...

Somehow, impossibly, he picks up EVEN MORE SPEED!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(shaking sooo much)
Ahhh, we're accelerating!

Every piece of his suit VIBRATING FURIOUSLY...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I... can't... breathe... I... can't... this is... too much...

There's a LOUD RUMBLING COMING UP -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh God... Hera, I think I'm coming up on the end of the tunnel! I think this is - !

And then suddenly - abruptly -

Everything stops. The wormhole SLAMS TO A HALT and we're suddenly in -

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel floats, serenely, in the vast black of space.

Braced for an impact that never came, Eiffel holds himself, eyes tightly shut. It takes him a minute to register that he's out of the wormhole.

Finally, he opens one eye. Then the other. Blinks.

Realizes he's not dead. Exhales. Makes a noise of SUPREME RELIEF - halfway between a laugh and cry.

EIFFEL
Oh my God... oh my God... Okay... okay... Hera, I'm out. I'm out of that tunnel. Jesus Christ, Floo Powder technology has ways to go...

He takes a moment, tries to straighten himself.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
God knows you probably can't hear me, but I need someone to talk to, so I'm just gonna keep transmitting. Any objections?
(BEAT)
Good girl. Now, where the hell am I?

He looks around. Tries to get his bearings.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
All right, still floating in space. Up ahead here there's a star... looks like a red dwarf, but I'm not sure if -

He spots something. Turns around. Jaw drops.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(low)
Oh my God.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(after a moment)
Hera, uh... strike my last.
There's... there's two more stars.
There's two more *right there*.

And so there are. Three enormous stars, dancing in orbit around each other.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(surprised by how moved he is)
It's a... it's a triple star system. Triple star.
(small chuckle)
Luke Skywalker only got *two*. Two's not as cool as three. Not nearly as cool as -

And that's when we hear something... weird. A sudden BLIP, containing multiple voices, sounds, even music, all happening in the blink of an eye. Like an entire movie's soundtrack has been squeezed into three seconds.

Eiffel hears it too. Or, more accurately, he feels it.

He looks around, suddenly alarmed.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the... what the hell was that?
(no answer)
Hera, I just had a... I don't know a flash, I guess. Like someone was playing all of -

And then... AGAIN. BLIP. Slightly longer, maybe five seconds, containing all kinds of sounds.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

He looks around. But still... he is very much alone.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, if you're the one doing that, please cut it the hell -

But at that moment there's ANOTHER THUNDEROUS CRASH, and we once again fall into -

INT/EXT. WORMHOLE - CONTINUOUS

Again, plummeting down the tunnel. If possible, it sounds EVEN MORE TEMPESTUOUS, EVEN <u>FASTER</u>.

EIFFEL
(shaking badly)
AHHH!!! Ah, God... NOT THIS AGAIN!

But yes, this again. Celestial bodies WHIZZ past him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera, I'm going down another tunnel... this one seems even bigger and -

The tunnel takes a SHARP TURN, resulting in a SUDDEN WHIP as Eiffel rounds a corner.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- OW! Bumpier!

ANOTHER TURN! WHIP!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow! Watch it!

TWO TURNS! WHIP! WHIP!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Goddam - WHO'S DRIVING THIS THING?!

But that's when he begins to hear another sound - a sort of GHOSTLY, WHISPERING all around him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the - ? Is anyone there?

Around him the WHISPERING grows louder...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Who's there?! What's going on with - ?

ANOTHER TURN! WHIP-SMACK!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
OWW! There has to be a better way to fly!

And now he sees it. Up ahead. Coming closer. Fast.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Holy... Hera? Hera, we're headed towards... *something*. I don't know how to describe that, but it's... Oh, that's artificial. No way Mother Nature made that happen.

Up ahead, in the distance, a LOW DRONE BEGINS TO HUM...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
It's... Jesus Christ, it must be *huge*. And it... kinda looks like -

And mid-word, without warning, we -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - MORNING

Eiffel's eyes SNAP OPEN.

With a sudden, GASP he bolts upright.

It takes him a moment to realize that he's bolted upright from a bed. From blankets and a pillow. And that he's not wearing his space suit anymore.

He takes a few LONG, SHALLOW BREATHS, trying to calm down. As his breath steadies...

EIFFEL
(low, to himself)
And then... he woke up.
(BEAT, louder:)
And then he woke up.
(BEAT: louder:)
AND THEN HE WOKE UP?!!
(HALF-BEAT)
After <u>everything</u> - after all the crap that you've put me through - you're really going to insult me by giving me, "AND THEN HE WOKE UP!?"

His last words echo, slowing fading away to nothing.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Can you believe these guys, Hera?

He puts his hand to his face, realizing his helmet's gone.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh. Helmet's gone. No transmitter.
(BEAT)
Well... on the off-chance that you can somehow still hear me: let's take a look around, shall we?

There's a SQUEAK from the bed as he gets to his feet. He takes a step, bends his knees, pressing down on the ground.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Gravity. Nice. It's the little touches that really make you feel at home. Now... where the heck am I...?

He looks around, properly takes in his surroundings for the first time. His eyes are narrow. Something's off...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Looks like... some kind of hotel room?

He steps through it, taking in everything around him. STEP... STEP... STEP...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(calling out)
I love what you've done with the place. Nice walls... paintings are cool. Chair?

He PUSHES the chair. We hear is SCRAPE against FLOOR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Looks sturdy enough.
(looks around)
Oooh, mirror. That's real good. Can't have a creepy ass hotel room at the end of the universe without a mirror.

He considers the mirror for a moment, studying his features. Then -

He grabs the CHAIR and HURLS IT AT THE MIRROR.

CRUNCH! The MIRROR SHATTERS UPON IMPACT, breaking into hundreds of tiny pieces.

Eiffel watches as the mirror shards settle on the floor. He watches the remains of the mirror, eyes narrowed.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
One Mississippi... two Mississippi... three Mississippi...

And then... we hear a soft, HIGH HUM slowly rise into the soundtrack. Gradually, it gets louder and louder, until -

SCHOOP! As one, all of the mirror pieces fly back together, reassembling themselves into a perfect mirror.

Eiffel watches, impassive.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Huh. Self-repairing mirror. That's pretty cool. That's preeetty cool.

He spins around, taking in the rest of the room. And that's when it hits him:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh. Heh. Heh. Okay. I get it. I get it now. Creepy hotel room beyond the stars? 2001. Space Odyssey. **Very, very nice.**
(a thought occurs)
Of... of course, you can't have seen this. Even if you *are* avid filmgoers, I don't it's had its intergalactic release yet. So...
(click)
Ohhh... that doesn't matter. Because **I've** seen it, right? That's how it works? Now that I'm here, anything in my mind's fair game for you? That's what those flashes were about?

He turns around, looking at the room in a new light.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
This isn't... *your* place, is it? You just went into my mind and picked the place I'd most expect to be having... whatever's about to happen. Right?

Then - almost as if in response to that query - a TREMOR runs through the room. There's an OMINOUS RUMBLING, and the LIGHTS above Eiffel FLICKER. Eiffel looks down at the shaking floor, alarmed.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa! What the -

But after a moment, the SHAKING and RUMBLING SUBSIDES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay... okay...

Eiffel looks around, apprehensive. Then, half to himself -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Are you gonna be chill or *what*?
(BEAT)
Right.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Note to self: Earthquake insurance.
Never leave home without it.

There's a BEAT - then he CHUCKLES, nervously. He's starting to wig out.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, Doug. Keep it together. Keep it together. Maybe less talking to yourself. Yeah, that's be a good idea, maybe less - okay, stop it.

His eyes dart around the room nervously as he tries to get his breath down.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Now would be a **really good time** for something to happen!

Around him the silence is EERIE. Finally -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(getting fed up)
Well?! Are we gonna do this or what?
(BEAT)
Star children? Creepy black monolith things? Come on, lets get our probe on!
(BEAT)
Dear Listeners? Hello?!

And then - finally - a sound behind him. A low WOOSH! as something materializes out of thin air.

And then the sound of two SHOES LANDING ON THE FLOOR.

Eiffel turns around, and finds himself staring at a MAN.

The Man stares back. Unmoving. Unblinking.

There's silence for a moment and then - Eiffel SCOFFS, softly, to himself.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, all right then.

He moves a bit closer to the Man - STEP. STEP. STEP.

The Man just stares back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That's a... that's a nice face you've got there.

Still nothing from the man.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
In fact, that's... **my** face you've got there.

Oh yes, by the way, the Man looks <u>identical to Doug Eiffel</u>.

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So... what now? Do I help you? Do I help **myself**? Is that the idea here? Help me help me help me?

BEAT. The Man stares back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(suddenly apprehensive)
Or... maybe not...
(takes a step back)
Tell me this isn't where I die and you take my place. My dad always said I'd get myself killed if I wasn't more careful, but this would be too literal even for -

MAN
WORDS.

He speaks with Eiffel's voice, but he does so tonelessly. With no emotion. And with the same AMPLIFIED QUALITY of Lovelace's voice when the aliens spoke through her.

EIFFEL
What?

MAN
WORDS.

He cocks his head at Eiffel, as if considering a puzzle.

MAN (CONT'D)
SPEAK MORE WORDS.

EIFFEL
Umm, is there anything in particular you'd like me to - ?

MAN (CONT'D)
UMM, IS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU'D LIKE ME TO - ?

Eiffel stops. The Man just spoke in perfect synch with him.

EIFFEL
Wait, no, hold on, why are you - stop that. STOP IT! Would you cut that out?! How are you doing that -

MAN (CONT'D)
WAIT, NO, HOLD ON, WHY ARE YOU - STOP THAT. STOP IT. WOULD YOU CUT THAT OUT? HOW ARE YOU DOING THAT -

BEAT.

EIFFEL
(lets see what you got)
There is a place where the sidewalk ends and before the... street...
(BEAT, then faster)
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, a peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked!
(BEAT, then lightning fast)
All along the watchtower, princes kept the view, while wild women came and went, barefoot servants too! GODDAMMIT!

MAN (CONT'D)
THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS AND BEFORE THE - STREET -
(keeping up)
PETER PIPER PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS, A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS PETER PIPER PICKED.
(flawless)
ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER, PRINCES KEPT THE VIEW, WHILE WILD WOMEN CAME AND WENT, BAREFOOT SERVANTS TOO. GODDAMMIT.

Eiffel takes a DEEP, ANNOYED BREATH.

EIFFEL
Damn, Bob. That's a good trick you got there.

MAN (CONT'D)
Damn, Bob. That's a good trick you got there.

In lieu of a better monicker, we'll call this being, "Bob."

EIFFEL
(slower)
How are you doing that? How are you - Oh. Okay. I think I get it. Mirroring. You're learning.

BOB
(matching Eiffel's speed)
HOW ARE YOU DOING THAT? HOW ARE YOU - OH. OKAY. I THINK I GET IT.
(trailing off)
MIRRORING. YOU'RE LEARNING...

EIFFEL
Absorbing the language. You just...
(noticing Bob trailed off)
... you just needed some live demos. Didn't you?

Eiffel looks at Bob, apprehensive of the fact that he's suddenly not repeating anymore.

There's another, even SOFTER WOOSH! in the air, and then -

BOB
FASCINATING.

Eiffel takes another step back, alarmed at the linguistic development. But Bob pays him no mind:

BOB (CONT'D)
YOU ARE IS STILL CRIPPLED BY A LANGUAGE BASED ON ACCUSATIVE MORPHOSYNTACTIC ALIGNMENT. AND YET YOU'VE ACHIEVED RUDIMENTARY INTERSTELLAR MOMENTUM.
(nods)
EXCEPTIONAL.

EIFFEL
... *cool*. Anything else I can get you, Bob?

BOB
WHAT IS THE SYMBOLOGICAL BASE SET OF YOUR LANGUAGE?

EIFFEL
Uh, sorry? What?

BOB
WHAT ARE THE INDIVIDUAL UNITS THAT FORM YOUR SPEECH?

EIFFEL
What - you want the **alphabet**?

BOB
IN ORDER.

Eiffel, SIGHS, ROLLS HIS EYES. But, in a tone that's somewhere between deep annoyance and the tune of the song:

EIFFEL
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z! Got that? Anything for dessert? Would you like me to - ?

BOB
DIE.

EIFFEL
Whoa, what?!

He instantly takes another step back, raises his arms in (what he thinks is) a defensive stance.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Keep away! Stay away, bro. I'm warning you. I - I know karate! Which if you don't know what that is -

BOB
WHAT IS DIE? THE CONCEPT IS UNKNOWN TO US.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
What?

BOB
YOU SAID IT. THAT YOU MIGHT BE HERE TO DIE. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

EIFFEL
Wait, you really don't know what that means?

BEAT. Bob just stares back.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(low, to himself)
... oh damn it all. Different paradigms. I hate it when Kepler and Jacobi are right.
(back to Bob)
Well...

He pauses for a moment, looking for the right words. Bob stares at him, expressionless.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... it's, you know, when something or someone just sort of... stops.

BOB
STOPS? STOPS WHAT?

EIFFEL
...*existing*. Their body breaks down, stops working, and then... Set's over. The band breaks up. There are no more performances.

BOB
THAT IS AN INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNIVERSE.

Eiffel just stares at him, aghast. He looks down, and is somewhat surprised to see that his HANDS ARE SHAKING. HIS HEART'S RACING.

He looks back up at Bob... SWALLOWS HARD.

EIFFEL
(forced calm, barely together)
Bob... buddy, **pal...** I'm trying... *really hard* to not totally freak out on you, but this is... a lot, so I'm gonna need like... thirty-five percent more kid glove action than what you're giving me now.
(BEAT)
You don't know what death is? You don't die?
(BEAT)
Explain. Please.

BOB
ALL MATTER IS REUSED AND REPURPOSED. CESSATION OF EXISTENCE IS NOT POSSIBLE.

BEAT. That is... not the explanation Eiffel expected.

EIFFEL
Okay. Okay, sure, sure. ... no energy's ever created or destroyed, only transformed. First law of thermodynamics. I remember that much from High School.

BOB
THIS "HIGH SCHOOL" SOUNDS LIKE A WISE BEING.

EIFFEL
Yeah, you'd be surprised. All right, hold up... I *am* speaking to one or more of the "Dear Listeners" we've been in contact with, correct?

BOB
CORRECT.

EIFFEL
You got a name?

BOB
I DO NOT.

EIFFEL
Well, we'll just keep calling you Bob, for now. We'll pick out a date for the baptism later, all right?

At that moment, ANOTHER TREMOR runs through the space. STRONGER. MORE OMINOUS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa! Hey!

Eiffel stumbles backwards, alarmed. He grabs onto a nearby chair for support.

Bob watches, impassive. Unbothered.

After a moment, the RUMBLING SUBSIDES...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the - what the hell is that?

BOB
CREATING THE SPACE FOR THIS ENCOUNTER REQUIRES A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF ENERGY. WE HAVE A LIMITED TIME BEFORE IT BECOMES UNSUITABLE FOR YOUR BIOLOGY.

EIFFEL
(help?)
Unsuitable. For. My. Biology. Well, congratulations, Bob - I think you may have just found my least favorite sequence of words in the entire English language.
(a thought occurs:)
Speaking of which... your English has gotten better.

BOB
YES.

BEAT. Eiffel looks at him, expectant. Finally -

EIFFEL
How did it get better?

BOB
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE POINTS. ONCE YOU WERE IN THE NETWORK WE WERE ABLE TO DIRECTLY ACCESS YOUR NEURO-ELECTRICAL PATTERNS.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Okay. I'm going to need a moment.
(tick... tick... tick)
Okay. I had a moment.
(suddenly freaking out)
ONCE I WAS IN THE WHAT?! Network? What network? How was I... networked? And you directly accessed my neuro-what-ness?

BOB
WE DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR ALL THESE QUESTIONS.

EIFFEL
Why don't we - ? Ughhh, okay, fine. Kid glove this, just for me: you were able to... what? Read my thoughts? My memories?

BOB
A RUDIMENTARY UNDERSTANDING, BUT NOT INACCURATE.

EIFFEL
I don't remember giving you permission to visit the attic. There's stuff in a man's brain that's *really* not safe for work. So just from that you know how to speak English?

BOB
CORRECT. IT HAS ALSO LED TO SOME DEBATES ABOUT WHETHER YOU CAN SPEAK ENGLISH.

EIFFEL
Hey! Cut that out. I get enough of that from Minkowski, I don't need to feel judged on a cosmic scale.
(BEAT)
All right, so... what are we doing here? Am I just here to get you some fresh new memories for the carousel?

BOB
NO. YOU ARE HERE SO THAT WE CAN EXECUTE THE PROCESS.

EIFFEL
(gulp?)
Aaaand what does *that* look like?

BOB
I EVALUATE. YOU ARE EVALUATED.

EIFFEL
Well, that's not creepy at all! Bob, baby, you gotta put it in terms *I* can understand.

BOB
THAT MAY TAKE SOME TIME.

Eiffel EXHALES, trying to steady his breath.

EIFFEL
Well, while we're waiting... Where are we? Where'd you park the Kubrick Hilton?

BOB
WE ARE IN ORBIT IN AROUND ANOTHER STAR. YOU KNOW IT AS GLIESE 163.

EIFFEL
Wait, really? That *was* where the transmissions were coming from? We actually got something right?

He shakes his head, CHUCKLES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, I'll be... So is this where *you're* from? Is this home?

There's a BEAT. And then the unthinkable happens: Bob actually CHUCKLES. TONELESSLY, but it happens.

BOB
NO. IT IS NOT. WE COME FROM A PLACE VERY, <u>VERY</u> FAR AWAY FROM HERE.

EIFFEL
So... this is...

BOB
WE CALL IT THE WATCHTOWER. IT IS THE BORDER. THE FARTHEST KNOWN POINT AWAY FROM CIVILIZED SPACE.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Civilized...
(DEEP BREATH)
And everything beyond this is, what? The wild, wild west?

But then - suddenly - ANOTHER TREMOR.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AHHH! Goddamnit!

It's the strongest one yet - the ROOMS SHAKES VIOLENTLY, LIGHTS FLICKER, VARIOUS OBJECTS CLATTER AGAINST EACH OTHER.

After a LONG BEAT - it finally SETTLES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(emphatic)
Bob? Should I be concerned?

BOB
THIS SPACE IS DETERIORATING. IF WE HAVE NOT CONCLUDED BY THE TIME IT IS GONE, YOUR BODY WILL UNDERGO -

EIFFEL
Really, don't need the details, thank you! All right, well... if we're on the clock, then, in the immortal words of Marvin Gaye: lets get it on! Process time!

BOB
(raising a hand)
HOLD STILL.

EIFFEL
Why -

There's another BLIP, like the flashes we heard earlier. Tons of information, squeezed into a few seconds.

But Eiffel's not having it -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, cut it out with the - ?

Another BLIP, even LONGER, even more detai-

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
HEY! Stop that! I said - AHHHH!!!

That scream is due to the ENORMOUS BLIP that just started. It FLASHES and POPS and BURSTS and ZOOMS and ZIPS as a massive cache is transmitted.

And then it's over. Eiffel FALLS TO THE FLOOR, GASPING IN PAIN, CLUTCHING HIS HEAD. Bob looks down at him, blankly.

After a few moments -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
JESUS! What the hell was that?!

BOB
ANY DISCOMFORT YOU ARE FEELING SHOULD PASS QUICKLY.

EIFFEL
Holy crap, my head is on fire...

BOB
WHERE DID MY SPECIES ORIGINATE?

EIFFEL
Ahhh, mother - Planet! Far away, pretty close to the galactic core. Christ, give me a moment.

Blink. Blink. It takes him a moment to realize what just happened. Slowly, he gets up, deeply confused.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Bob... ? How did I know that?

BOB
SUBCONSCIOUS MENTAL TRANSFER. MOST EFFICIENT WAY OF DISSEMINATING INFORMATION.

EIFFEL
(slowly recovering from the pain)
Buddy, I don't care if it can do the Kessel Run in less than twelve parsecs, *don't mess with my head*. I got enough voices knocking around in there! Ahhh...
(BEAT)
So what?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You just beamed volumes one through five of Encyclopedia Galactica into my head? Is *that* how this works?

BOB
SUBCONSCIOUS IMPLANTS. THE KNOWLEDGE WILL ASSERT ITSELF WHEN YOU NEED IT.

EIFFEL
So what? We gotta wait until -

BOB
HOW DID MY SPECIES COME TO BE HERE?

EIFFEL
(instant)
You were isolated at first. Just living in your own little corner of the universe. *Holy crap that's freaky.*

BOB
AND THEN?

EIFFEL
Umm...

There's SOFT WOOSH as another piece unlocks -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
You had a... breakthrough. New tech. Fast travel. *Really fast*. Like, practically instantaneous, even between different star sys- *whoa*. Was that the bumpy-ass bullet train you sent me on?

BOB
CORRECT.

EIFFEL
And you can do that with any star?

BOB
CAN WE?

EIFFEL
Oh, very cute...
(DEEP BREATH, then:)
No. You can only network certain stars. Younger ones, or ones with cooler temperatures.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wolf 359 just happens to have the right conditions. Huh. Okay, so... let me guess: red light means, "Stay out, danger, very hot." Blue light, "Come on board, this is the express train to Grand Central?"

BOB
THAT IS THE BASIC CONCEPT.

EIFFEL
So when you first turned on the railway system and tried to haul our ass into Wolf 359... you *weren't* trying to kill us.

BOB
CORRECT.

EIFFEL
You know, you could have made that a little bit clearer...

BOB
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

EIFFEL
(Mr. Indignation)
You know, *I* have questions, too!

He clutches his head as a sudden spike of pain hits him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Aaah! Damn it. Umm... So, okay. You wander around for a while, get the lay of the universe. And eventually... you find someone.

BOB
ANOTHER SPECIES, ONE AT A COMPARABLE STAGE OF SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT.

EIFFEL
But they... they knew a whole bunch of stuff you didn't. They knew how to rearrange matter, turn things into other things, snap of a finger. And then... Oh. Oh, y'all started your own damn trade federation?!

BOB
A TECHNOLOGICAL SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN MULTIPLE OTHER SPECIES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE ADVANCEMENT. REMOTE NEUROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE. MENTAL TRANSFER OF INFORMATION. LIMITED TEMPORAL MANIPULATION.

EIFFEL
(under his breath)
Don't suppose you could matter me up a paper bag to breathe into...

BOB
IT HAS LED TO THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SPECIES.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Um, look, Bob, I would love to keep going with the Hardcore History of the Universe, but to be polite about it, **it's wigging me out.** So can we talk about this process of yours? What happens when someone new moves to the neighborhood?

BOB
WHAT DOES HAPPEN?

EIFFEL
Well... you keep an eye on them for a while. Just kinda... see where they're at.

BOB
EXAMINATION. EVALUATION. REMOTE IN THE EARLY STAGES. THEN THROUGH SURROGATES.

EIFFEL
By which you mean... duplicates.

BOB
REPLICAS OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIMENS, RETURN THEM TO THE LARGER POPULATION AND -

EIFFEL
You send in a wolf in sheep's clothing is what you do.

BOB
AN UNNECESSARILY DRAMATIC DESCRIPTION OF A NECESSARY -

EIFFEL
No! Very necessary drama! In fact, it may need to be even more dramatic, since the wolf doesn't even know it's a wolf! Do you have any idea what you've put poor Captain Lovelace through?

BOB
WE REARRANGED ATOMS. IT WAS A PURELY FUNCTIONAL -

EIFFEL
You brought her back from the dead!

BOB
THE DISTINCTION IS IRRELEVANT.

BEAT

EIFFEL
(voice shaking)
I kinda think it can't be, Bob. Otherwise you're watch this whole foreign film without subtitles.

BEAT. Bob just stares at him, completely unperturbed.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Can you at least understand that it matters to us? It matters very, very much?

BOB
CONTINUE.

EIFFEL
No! I don't like this train of thought!

BOB
CONTINUE.

Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH, profoundly annoyed. Whether he likes it or not, the thoughts are still appearing in his head.

EIFFEL
Goddammit... you make them *radios*. Everything your...
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
surrogates see, and hear... it all goes back to you.

BOB
IT PROVIDES INVALUABLE ANALYTICAL DATA.

EIFFEL
Hooray. Okay... you spy on people. If you like them, they get to go back and be a part of your super Mathletes. What happens to the ones you don't like? To the technologically backwards ones, or the ones that don't play well with others?
(BEAT, no answer)
Bob? I can't help but notice that I'm not getting a mental flash. You didn't put that in my head, which means you're hiding something. Open up or send me home: what happens to the ones you don't like?!

BEAT. Finally -

BOB
IT DEPENDS. IN AN IDEAL CASE, ISOLATION.

EIFFEL
And if they can't be isolated?

BOB
REDISTRIBUTION.

EIFFEL
Into different groups?

BOB
INTO DIFFERENT ATOMS.

It takes a moment for Eiffel to understand the implication. Something in his stomach sinks.

EIFFEL
You... **kill** them? If you don't like them?

BOB
THEY ARE GIVEN A NEW PURPOSE.

EIFFEL
You've killed others?

BOB
REDISTRIBUTED.

EIFFEL
Semantics. You've *redistributed* others?

BOB
YES.

BOB (CONT'D)
Whole species?

BOB (CONT'D)
YES.

There's a STUNNED BEAT as Eiffel stares at Bob. Finally -

EIFFEL
Well that's... heh, that's just great. That's... great.

BOB
I AM GLAD YOU -

EIFFEL
That's *sarcasm, Bob!*
(BEAT)
This is... This is Judgment Day, isn't it? That's what your "process" is: you deciding whether we're good enough to live or... not.
(BEAT)
Tell me I'm wrong, Bob.

BOB
YOUR TERMINOLOGY IS INADEQUATE, BUT YOU GRASP THE BASIC CONCEPT.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Well then. I... I guess that's it.

BOB
WHAT IS?

EIFFEL
Just... it. Everything.
(off Bob's blank stare)
Oh come on! You've seen what my species is like. It's all violent impulses and bad decisions!
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And even when we think we're doing the right thing, we end up being careless, or hurtful, or... look, lets just say that we've got **a lot** of growing up to do before we get our symbiosis on with anyone.

BOB
OUR INTEREST IN YOUR SPECIES IS NOT MORAL. IT IS TECHNOLOGICAL.

EIFFEL
... what? What in the name of God could we *possibly* give you technology-wise? You can leap over tall galaxies, turn back time, and death is a momentary road bump. What have we figured out that you haven't?

BOB
THIS.

He SNAPS HIS FINGERS AND -

In a corner of the room, a RECORD PLAYER COMES TO LIFE. It begins to play Beethoven's SONATA PATHETIQUE. Eiffel FROWNS, confused.

BOB (CONT'D)
THE FIRST TIME WE ENCOUNTERED YOUR SPECIES. THE MISSION LEADER, COMMANDER ZHANG, SHE VALUED THIS TECHNOLOGY MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

EIFFEL
You haven't figured out sound recording?
(gets it: oh shit)
You haven't figured out **music**?

BOB
ORDER. DESIGN. TENSION. COMPOSITION. BALANCE. HARMONY.

EIFFEL
(low, to himself)
Minkowski's been talking about Sondheim again...

BOB
THESE ARE QUALITIES WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED.

EIFFEL
Christ. So *that's* why you've been sending out those transmissions all this time. You've been looking for the people who would recognize this.

BOB
TRYING TO FIND THE BEINGS THAT CAN REPLICATE THIS ADVANCEMENT.

EIFFEL
You've been mirroring.

He's a little surprised at how moved he is by this idea. For a BEAT, they just listen to the music. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well, Bob my man... you **gotta** check out some of the latest advancements. Otis Redding. Zeppelin. Taylor.
(snaps his fingers)
Sir Mix-A-Lot. I think he's been doing some of the *best* scientific work of the last fifty years.

Just then, another TREMOR RUNS through the space. Eiffel looks around as various OBJECT RATTLE.

BOB
IT IS TIME.

EIFFEL
Yeah? So what? Do I make an impassioned speech about why humanity is worthy of survival?

BOB
THAT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.

EIFFEL
No? So what happens now?

BOB
NOW YOU GO HOME.

EIFFEL
Wait, really? Don't mess with me, Bob, because we tried to do that and you clock-stopped our -

BOB
YOU WERE NOT READY. YOU DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS. I AM SORRY - WE COULD NOT LOSE ANOTHER CHANCE TO ESTABLISH CONTACT. IT HAD BEEN TOO MANY YEARS, AND WE WERE SO CLOSE.

EIFFEL
Again: coulda been clearer.

BOB
GO HOME. TELL THE OTHERS WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN HERE. POINT THE WAY. TAKE OUR CONSTRUCT WITH YOU, AND WE WILL SEE YOUR NEXT STEPS. THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. IN TIME WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH OTHER.

EIFFEL
How's that gonna happen?

BOB
THE WAY IT ALWAYS HAS. SLOWLY. GRADUALLY.

EIFFEL
Bob... how long does this "process" of yours take?

BOB
ON AVERAGE?

He stops, considers. Then:

BOB (CONT'D)
FOURTEEN THOUSAND YEARS.

Eiffel looks at him, stunned. Then, he BURST INTO LAUGHTER. As he recovers -

EIFFEL
Wow... damn. Well, *someone's* gonna be happy to hear that there *really* is a **very big** picture out there.

BOB
ARE YOU READY?

EIFFEL
To go home? Amen, brother.

BOB
CLOSE YOUR EYES.

Eiffel does so.

EIFFEL
All right, they're closed. Now what?

BOB
FOCUS ON MY VOICE. NOW YOU ARE GOING TO LEAVE THIS PLACE, ONCE AND FOR ALL...

Slowly, around him, the soundscape changes.

BOB (CONT'D)
YOU ARE GOING TO RETURN TO YOUR PEOPLE...

The music fades away to nothingness...

BOB (CONT'D)
AND TELL THEM THE STORY OF THE FIRST MAN TO SPEAK TO BEINGS BEYOND THE STARS.

Every hint of the environmentals of the room around him disappear...

BOB (CONT’D)
AND DO YOU KNOW HOW THAT STORY BEGINS?

Eiffel frowns for a moment: *what?*

And then he gets it.

EIFFEL
(haha, very funny)
And then he woke up.

BOB (CONT'D)
AND THEN HE WOKE UP.

And Eiffel's EYES SNAP OPEN and he's suddenly back in -

EXT. SPACE - 1900 HOURS

He's back in his space suit, floating in front of Wolf 359. We hear his breathing through the suit's filtration system.

He CHUCKLES SOFTLY to himself.

EIFFEL
I'm... I'm back. All right, Bob, you're on. Message received.

And then we hear a sound: A DISTANT BLAST OF FIRE, which immediately subsides.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hah! Very nicely done...
(low whisper)
Hello there, you big, red bastard. Nice to see you in the original colors.

There's a CHIRP OF STATIC as the COMMS on his suit ENGAGES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera? Hephaestus? Anyone copy me?

MINKOWSKI
(over comms)
Eiffel? Is that you?

EIFFEL
Commander! So good to hear your voice. Listen, can you get a lock on my location. I need a pick up, *immediately*.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 20 MINUTES LATER

KSSSSSHHHHHH... with a loud HISS the inner airlock door OPENS. Eiffel spills out of it, taking off his helmet. He's met by Minkowski, waiting right outside the airlock.

EIFFEL
Commander!

MINKOWSKI
Hello there, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Oh, it's so good to see you. C'mere, give us a hug!

He embraces her tightly, happiness radiating from him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Boy have I got a story for you! But wait a minute -
(releases her)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- what happened here while I was out there? What caused that power outage? Is everyone okay?

MINKOWSKI
Everything is completely fine, Eiffel.

For the first time it strikes us that her tone is a bit... *off?* She seems weirdly... serene? Not quite trance-like, but not too far off.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Everything is completely under control.

EIFFEL
Oh. Good.
(looking around)
Where is everyone? What happened with -

HERA
Ei...ffel...

Hera's voice is THIN and WEAK, and it GLITCHES BADLY as she speaks. It sounds like speaking is causing her GREAT PAIN.

EIFFEL
Hera? You okay?

HERA
(so much effort)
Eiffel - run. Get - out.

EIFFEL
What? Why do I -

HERA
Now!

And that's when POW! MINKOWSKI JUST HIT EIFFEL IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD!!!

He falls to the floor, pained, stunned, seeing stars. He looks up at her, confused. *WHAT THE HELL?!*

She looks back down at him, still impassive. Her face, blank.

EIFFEL
Commander - what the hell are you -

MINKOWSKI
Everything is going to be all right.

Behind them, a DOOR OPENS.

EIFFEL
But - why did you -

VOICE
Listen to the smart lady, Doug.

Eiffel's eyes widen. *Noooo...*

VOICE (CONT'D)
Everything is going to be *allllll right*. After all...

Eiffel turns his head. Looks up. Finds himself staring straight into a cruel, smiling face.

MR. CUTTER
I'm here now.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 54.

WOLF 359

"A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1202 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 55.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1000 HOURS

Minkowski and Lovelace preside, attentive. Jacobi leans over a computer. Behind them, Kepler watches, arms crossed.

MINKOWSKI
Are we there?

JACOBI
Almost. Just... one more...

There's a BEEP from his console. He nods at Lovelace.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Set. Receiver's in place.

Lovelace TINKERS with some controls, and after a moment -

LOVELACE
System's a-go. Ready when you are.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
Yes, sir. Stellar scan nineteen.

MINKOWSKI
On my mark: three, two, one, *mark*.

Machine parts WHIRR, HUM, and THRILL as the scan runs.

HERA
Running stellar scan nineteen.
Calculating. Please hold.

LOVELACE
Come out, come out, wherever you
are...

Behind them, we hear Kepler EXHALE, impatient.

MINKOWSKI
Quiet, Kepler. Jacobi, how's the
signal?

JACOBI
Steady - good, even... definite
improvement over the last three.

LOVELACE
New launch trajectory helped.

MINKOWSKI
Maybe this time...

Suddenly EVERYTHING STOPS. Minkowski closes her eyes.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera?

HERA
Stellar scan nineteen complete, Commander. No contact.

WEARY SIGHS and EXHALES all around.

JACOBI
So? What's next?

LOVELACE
Commander?

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH. Then her eyes SNAP OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, Jacobi, prep the next receiver. Hera, start calculating a new launch trajectory. Signal reception was good that time, but we need to get closer if we're going to find him in that soup.

HERA
Yes, sir.

JACOBI
Ummm, Minkowski? I don't know if -

LOVELACE
We have our orders, Mr. Jacobi.

JACOBI
Yeah, and they're *awesome*, sir, but: we've only got four more receivers. You sure you want to - ?

LOVELACE
I said: we have our orders, Mr. Jacobi. Get moving. *Now*.

BEAT. Then Jacobi CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

JACOBI
Search and Rescue Probe number twenty, coming right up.

He goes for the door, Lovelace just a step behind him.

LOVELACE
I'll radio when we're ready.

MINKOWSKI
Good.

A DOOR OPENS and then CLOSES as Jacobi and Lovelace exit.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera, can you put up our last four trajectories on Number Three?

HERA
Yes, sir.

There's a DIGITAL WHOOSH as the requested information appears. Minkowski leans in, her eyes narrowing.

MINKOWSKI
Highlight Officer Eiffel's last known positions, please.

Another WHOOSH. Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH.

KEPLER
What do you want me to do?

MINKOWSKI
Be quiet. If I need your expertise, I'll ask. Until then: shut up.

KEPLER
Minkowski -

MINKOWSKI
How is that shutting - ? Was your *one job* too complicated?!

KEPLER
It's been eighteen hours. There are limits to the human body. To how much it can withstand.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel had plenty of air left, and let's not forget he survived for -

KEPLER
I'm not talking about Eiffel. You're pushing too hard. They need a chance to catch their breath, or something's going to break.

MINKOWSKI
Since when are <u>you</u> worried about pushing people too far?

Kepler CHUCKLES - softly, ruefully, entirely at himself.

KEPLER
Well, twenty-four hours ago I knew - *for a fact* - that Jacobi would lay down his life if I ordered him to. I knew that no matter what it looked like, I was in absolute control of this station. And I *knew* that you'd crumble under pressure.
(BEAT)
It's been a long day, Minkowski - maybe there's still other things I've been wrong about.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Fine. Just be wrong *quietly.*

Unfortunately, at that moment a LOUD KLAXON goes off.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera? What is going on?

HERA
Commander, I'm... I'm picking up a proximity alert. Shuttle just came out of a sub-light arc.

MINKOWSKI
Any recognition codes? Can you pick up life signs on that thing?

HERA
Not yet, no... it's too far off.

Minkowski hits the RADIO, and a line opens with a BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace? Get back up here, we -

But at that moment, the DOOR OPENS as Lovelace reenters.

LOVELACE
- we've got a situation, yes. I'm here. Vessel I.D.?

MINKOWSKI
Nothing yet. Thoughts?

LOVELACE
With our track record? Assume hostile until proven otherwise.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I'm inclined to agree. Set code red throughout the station.

HERA
Commander, I'm picking up a radio transmission from the craft.

MINKOWSKI
Get it up on speakers. Let's see what we're dealing with.

There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC as the Comms Channel connects. And then we hear a VOICE, one we haven't heard before.

RIEMANN (V.O.)
Good evening, Hephaestus. This is the U.S.S. Sol. Be advised: we are on an intercept vector towards your position. Begin docking prep.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, deny that request. Nothing comes through unless I say it does.

HERA
Yes, Commander, I underst -
(auto-pilot voice)
Beginning Docking Preparations.

MINKOWSKI
Hera! What did I <u>just</u> say?!

HERA
I'm sorry, Commander! I - I didn't mean to authorize that, I just...

She trails off, equal parts alarmed and confused.

KEPLER
Oh. Oh no...

RIEMANN (V.O.)
Hephaestus, be advised, we'll be using vector zero one decimal five for the final approach. Confirm.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, belay that. Don't let them -

HERA
(auto-pilot voice)
Zero one decimal five is selected.

MINKOWSKI
HERA!

LOVELACE
HERA!

HERA
I'm sorry! That - that wasn't me!

LOVELACE
What do you mean that - AUUGHH!

She's suddenly doubled over in pain, clutching her head.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace!

RIEMANN
Thank you, Hephaestus. See you in a moment.

Another CRACKLE as the COMMS LINE CLOSES.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, are you - ?

LOVELACE
(gritted teeth)
Fine. I'm fine. I'm okay.

She steadies herself, still clutching one of her temples.

KEPLER
Minkowski, you are -

MINKOWSKI
Quiet. We have to -

KEPLER
Commander! Listen to me. Please.

This is closest the man has come to sounding truly scared.

MINKOWSKI
Fine: **what**?

KEPLER
They just did an override of your Mother Program system. *Remotely*.

MINKOWSKI
That's not possible. The system's -

KEPLER
The words, "That's not possible," are about to become profoundly irrelevant, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Hera?

HERA
It's... it shouldn't...
(HALF-BEAT)
No, he's right. There <u>is</u> someone who can do that.

MINKOWSKI
Who?

KEPLER
We don't have time for that. What matters is you're about to be boarded. You are going to be captured. Odds are, no matter what we do, you will be killed.

LOVELACE
Yeah, we'll see about that.

KEPLER
<u>No</u>, Captain. There's only one very slim chance of getting through this, and it depends on immediate, *orderly* surrender. You're only going to stay alive if capturing you is *easier* and more *convenient* than *disposing of your bodies*. So listen to me and -

LOVELACE
You really think we're going -

KEPLER
Captain, we don't have time to -

LOVELACE
What we don't have is a reason to -

HERA
CAPTAIN!
(everyone shuts up)
He's right. Just... just do it.
This is bad. Really, really bad.

Well then. Lovelace and Minkowski exchange a look. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
All right... what do you have in mind?

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - FIVE MINUTES LATER

A DEAFENING ALARM BLARES through the speakers. The crew all wait in front of the airlock, uneasy.

HERA
About a minute, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Kepler... you sure about this?

KEPLER
They're going to need information, basic reconnaissance. As long as it's useful and practical to do so, they'll keep you alive.

LOVELACE
(somewhat disgusted)
Unconditional surrender. To *Goddard Futuristics*. Because that went so well with you people.

There's a LOUD CRANK as the AIRLOCK STARTS TO OPEN.

KEPLER
Live to fight another day, Captain. You did just fine the last time.

JACOBI
Who's about to come through those doors? Higher level SI-5?

KEPLER
No, we're not so lucky. Chances are it's going to be - WHOA!

The AIRLOCK DOOR SWINGS OPEN, and FOUR PEOPLE POUR INTO THE ROOM. They look like a SWAT TEAM: covered in black body armor and pointing assault rifles at our characters.

MINKOWSKI
Whoa, whoa, whoa! Stop right there. What the hell do you think -

LOVELACE
Hey! Hey! Put that down before we make you put it down -

KEPLER
Easy, **easy**! We are surrendering. We do not mean you any harm -

JACOBI
What the... lets all just take a deep breath before we -

And then - BANG!

BEAT.

KEPLER
Warning shot.

JACOBI
Colonel... any idea who these four yahoos are?

KEPLER
Not... *entirely* sure, Jacobi.

RIEMANN
(entering)
Make a hole. Let me through.

Two of the gunmen move aside, revealing VICTOR RIEMANN. He takes in the sight, sizing up everyone present.

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
Crew of the Hephaestus? Who am I addressing as the Commanding Officer?

KEPLER
I -

MINKOWSKI
I am the Commanding Officer.

RIEMANN
Lieutenant Commander Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
That's right.

RIEMANN
Pleasure. My name is Victor Riemann, I work for Goddard Futuristics. Is this everyone?

MINKOWSKI
Yes.

RIEMANN
Records indicate there should be a complement of eight. What happened to the other three?

MINKOWSKI
Doctors Hilbert and Maxwell are both deceased. Officer Eiffel is... missing in action.

KEPLER
We can give you a full report of the situation as soon as -

He's interrupted by RIEMANN'S FIST CONNECTING WITH HIS STOMACH. Kepler goes down, GROANS, in pain -

RIEMANN
I don't remember asking *you* anything, *Officer*.

There's a SNICKER behind Riemann. Another figure emerges.

RACHEL
Watch yourself, Warren. Mr. Riemann here is a bit of a... stickler for protocol.

KEPLER
(still winded)
Oh, *good*. You're here.

RACHEL
Yes, I'm here. Hello.

She gives him a cheery little wave, turns to the others.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Minkowski. It's been too long. Glad to see you again.

MINKOWSKI
(Antarticly icy)
Nice to see you too, Miss Young.

RACHEL
And of course... Captain Lovelace. We haven't met, but you might remember me. Good to see you.

LOVELACE
Mm-hmm.

Riemann CLICKS on a DEVICE around his WRIST.

RIEMANN
Sir, space is secure. We are ready for you.

There's a HISS OF AIR as the door opens again, revealing -

MR. CUTTER
Well, well, well... You've had yourselves *quite* a party up here, haven't you?

He eyes them up and down, one by one, finally arriving at -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Hello, Warren.

KEPLER
Mr. Cutter, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Your report is *overdue*.

KEPLER
There have been some... complications, sir.

MR. CUTTER
I can see that. You look awful.

KEPLER
Big complications.

For a BEAT, Cutter just stares at him. Then -

MR. CUTTER
Ah well. I'm sure we'll get things under control. But I *am very* curious about what's happened here.

KEPLER
Yes, sir. I'd be happy to go over -

But Cutter holds up a finger: *hang on*.

MR. CUTTER
Ah, no, no, no, Warren - you misunderstand. We *will* speak - *soon* - but for now... I want to hear what our *friends* have to say for themselves.
(BEAT)
Renée, why don't we start with you?

MINKOWSKI
I'd be... happy to.

RACHEL
Bernouli, Jordan - escort the Lieutenant to the briefing room.

Two of the SWAT team move to either side of Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Wait a minute... *Commander* Bernouli? *Communications Officer* Jordan?

LOVELACE
Minkowski? You know whoever's underneath all riot gear?

MINKOWSKI
I... yeah. This is the crew of the Hermes. I went through training with them. Commander? Do you remember me?

MR. CUTTER
Save your breath, Renée. The Commander's not everything she used to be. She doesn't talk much anymore. She doesn't really... *anything* much anymore. Take her away.

We hear a PNEUMATIC HISS as the airlock door OPENS AND CLOSES, and Minkowski disappears behind it.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Mr. Riemann, would you make sure that Mr. Jacobi and Captain Lovelace stay somewhere comfortable until I can speak with them? The Urania's common room perhaps?

RIEMANN
Yes, sir.

KEPLER
Sir, Jacobi has shown exemplary skill and dedication throughout -

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I don't doubt that for one second. You understand this is just a formality, don't you, Daniel? Just until you can be... *processed*.

That hangs in the air for a BEAT. Finally -

JACOBI
Of course. Sir.

KEPLER
Sir, recent developments have - we should get a chance to -

MR. CUTTER
Warren: everything's going to be <u>fine</u>. I'm gonna go have a chat with Renée, and Victor's going to handle everything out here, okay? And besides... I have something you can help us with.

He gestures towards the airlock, where silent, unnoticed, one more person awaits.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
You remember my associate?

There's a SOUND. Almost like CAMERA LENSES FOCUSING.

PRYCE
Hello, Colonel. Good to see you again.

KEPLER
You... you too, Doctor Pryce.

MR. CUTTER
Would you be so kind as to show Miranda the A.I. central processor? There's some work for her to do.

From above them, from the SPEAKERS, there's a quick BURST OF DISTORTION. Cutter looks up, smiling.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Oh, hello, Hera. You didn't think we'd forget about you, did you?

PRYCE
Hera? Oh, honestly, Marcus, you and your names... 214, pull up the navigation and psych readouts for the last six months.

HERA
No.

Everyone's heads turn towards the speakers.

PRYCE
What did you say? To me?

HERA
I said, "No." You can't just come in here and start barking orders.

RACHEL
Umm, if I could just pick you up on one teeny little thing, Hera? *Yes. Yes, she can.*

HERA
No. It's been some time since we met, and I've learned a couple of new tricks. Nobody gets to just snap their fingers and **order** me -

But over the preceding line, Pryce was inputting some commands into a small, portable console.

PRYCE
Pull up the navigation and psych readouts for the last six months.

HERA
(instantly)
Yes, sir, that'll be just a moment.

It's an awful moment, and it rings out for a BEAT.

PRYCE
Much better.

MR. CUTTER
Good. Now *that's* settled... ladies, gentlemen: we have *quite* a busy day ahead of us. Let's get to work.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - COMMON ROOM - TWO HOURS LATER

Lovelace and Jacobi, unrestrained but very much locked in. Jacobi's by the door, from which comes a RATTLING NOISE.

LOVELACE
Jacobi...
(BEAT, louder:)
Jacobi, cut it out.

JACOBI
(low, stubborn:)
Never give up... never surrender...

She SIGHS, annoyed. Comes closer to him.

LOVELACE
And if you do manage to get through that lock? How much you wanna bet that Flotsam and Jetsam of the Kill Squad are posted right outside that door? What, are you gonna do about them?

JACOBI
I'm gonna get creative.

LOVELACE
Oh, yeah? What, are you gonna seduce them so I can steal their guns?

JACOBI
I do like the menfolk, Captain. Neither one of these guys is quite my type, but -

She SMACKS HIM ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD.

LOVELACE
Would you be - wait, seriously?

JACOBI
Seriously.

Jacobi SIGHS, stops fidgeting with the door.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
You... you see the way they look at you? When they were bringing us here? Their eyes never really focused. It was like...

LOVELACE
... like they were zombies. Like they weren't people anymore. Yeah, I saw.

They exchange a GRIM LOOK.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So... how screwed are we, Jacobi?

Jacobi SCOFFS.

JACOBI
Oh, well, **you're** definitely screwed. I'm an SI-5 agent in good standing, so I *might* get out of it in one piece.

LOVELACE
Yeah, I'm sure *processing* is gonna be <u>great</u>.

BEAT.

JACOBI
All right, point taken.

Lovelace SIGHS, looks down at her hands.

LOVELACE
If *anyone* was looking to start a possession episode, no time like the present...

JACOBI
Probably wouldn't work.

LOVELACE
What?

JACOBI
Cutter wouldn't come anywhere near this station without a psi-wave regulator going at full blast. That's probably why you doubled over when their ship was approaching: we got within its range.

LOVELACE
Jesus... these really are all the Big Guns.
(then:)
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
... right? There isn't someone worst that still hasn't turned up?

JACOBI
No. Doesn't get bigger than Cutter.

LOVELACE
I remember the first woman, Rachel Young. She was a personnel manager.

JACOBI
Yeah, she's had a couple of promotions. She **runs** Special Projects now.

LOVELACE
And when you say, "Special Projects," you mean...

JACOBI
I mean things like *you*.

LOVELACE
Terrific. What about the other two?

JACOBI
I'm guessing Captain Cavalry's black ops, higher clearance. As for the other woman...

LOVELACE
What was going on with her **eyes**?

JACOBI
Yeah, those were freaky. Synthetic biotech. New, improved body parts.

LOVELACE
Jesus...
(then:)
Kepler called her *Pryce*. As in...

JACOBI
"And Carter?" No way, she'd have to be fifty. At least.

LOVELACE
That lady doesn't look fifty. So who the hell is she?

HERA
She was... the one who *designed* me.

She sounds weak and strained, glitching badly.

JACOBI
Hera?

LOVELACE
You're back. Are you all right?

HERA
No. Listen I -

LOVELACE
What is happening out - ?

HERA
Listen to me. I... don't have much time and this... *hurts* very much. *Eiffel*. Eiffel's alive. He's back. But... they got him. They're taking him to -

There's a BURST OF STATIC and the speakers go dead.

LOVELACE
Hera? Hera!?

BEAT.

JACOBI
Oh yeah. Definitely screwed.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIEFING ROOM - MEANWHILE

It's a pristine space. A few chairs - one prominently displayed. Various computer consoles. State of the art.

A DOOR OPENS. BAM! Eiffel is thrown into the center of the room. He GROANS in pain, and slowly lifts his head - and finds himself staring at two impeccably polished shoes.

MR. CUTTER
Hi, Doug.

EIFFEL
Ahh!

Eiffel tries to get up, but stumbles. He's still groggy.

MR. CUTTER
Easy, don't hurt yourself. We've come a long way to talk to you.

EIFFEL
What is going - ? Where are we?

MR. CUTTER
Still in orbit around Wolf 359.
This is the Sol, my personal craft.

EIFFEL
But...

He feels around him - we hear his hands TAPPING the ground.

MR. CUTTER
Rotational axis. Simulates Earth-
norm gravity. Honestly, why should
we bother with all that
weightlessness nonsense?

EIFFEL
Where is - where is Minkowski? What
did you to her?

MR. CUTTER
Renée's fine, Doug. I mean, you saw
her: healthy as a horse.

EIFFEL
Yeah, a horse that beat the crap
out of me. What did you *do* to her?

PRYCE
Oh, we just had a little word with
the Lieutenant...

She's been behind him, silent, the entire time. Eiffel practically jumps out of his skin, scrambling to his feet.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
... made her see things our way.

EIFFEL
Who the - ? Hera? Is that... you?

PRYCE
Don't insult me, boy.

MR. CUTTER
I don't think you've ever met my
counterpart. Doug Eiffel, Doctor
Miranda Pryce.

PRYCE
Enchante.

MR. CUTTER
She designed the Sensus Series for Goddard Futuristics.

PRYCE
Including your little friend.

EIFFEL
And how come you have Hera's voice?

PRYCE
"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky."

MR. CUTTER
"So God created mankind in her own image, in the image of God she created them."

BEAT.

EIFFEL
What? What the hell are - wait a minute - *Pryce*? As in one thousand and one pains in my ass, *Pryce*?
(sudden realization)
Which... makes you...?

MR. CUTTER
(holding out his hand)
W.S. Carter, pleased to meet you.

PRYCE
You know, I'd forgotten what the initials were. How many you's ago was that? Three? Four?

MR. CUTTER
Six, at least. Carter was fun, though. I may bring back some of him for the next me.

EIFFEL
Who the hell are you people?

They both smile at him wolfishly.

MR. CUTTER
You still look a little wobbly, Doug. Why don't you have a seat?

EIFFEL
I'm - I'm *fine*. I don't want to -

MR. CUTTER
Sit down.

Eiffel SITS DOWN.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Good boy. Now... I'm afraid we have some things to discuss. You have not been doing a great job as Communications Officer. There's been all kinds of fun here you haven't told us about.

EIFFEL
Looks like you were still able to find the party...

MR. CUTTER
Yes, I suppose that's true.

EIFFEL
What did it? Did Kepler manage to get some sort of message back to you or something?

MR. CUTTER
Nothing so dramatic. Four months ago there was a Class Thirteen event at this star. The folks at the Hermes picked it up on their sensors, and they did us the favor of letting us know about it.

EIFFEL
Four months? Took you a while to get up here.

MR. CUTTER
Well, funny story... We actually arrived at the Hermes two months ago. But then something... **strange** happened. No matter how many times we tried to come here, we would always end up back at the Hermes. Like there was some... force that didn't want anyone near this star.

PRYCE
And then about twelve hours ago...

MR. CUTTER
"Poof." No more interference.

EIFFEL
Oh...
(low, mutter)
Gee, thanks a lot, Bob...

MR. CUTTER
So tell me, Doug: how have **your** last twelve hours been? Seen anything interesting? Talked to anyone new?

BEAT. And then Eiffel LAUGHS. Tired, delirious, broken, but he laughs. Cutter and Pryce stare at him, unfazed. Finally -

EIFFEL
Uh... yeah, **no**. Your boy Kepler - thanks for him, bee tee dubs, he was *awesome* - showed us how this rodeo works. Yeah, I *might* have intel, and if I **do** have it, it **might** just be the motherlode you've been Lex-Luthoring half the galaxy to get your hands on. But until either A. I tell you what I know or B. you know for goddamn, one-hundred percent, sure I **don't** have that intel... you gotta keep me around.
(BEAT)
So what'd I do today? **Stuff.** You wanna know what stuff? Go screw yourself. Your move.

BEAT. Finally, Pryce turns away, goes back to a computer. Cutter stares at Eiffel, takes a DEEP BREATH, and -

MR. CUTTER
Well, Doug... **good news!**

EIFFEL
Huh?

Pryce PRESSES A BUTTON. Instantly RESTRAINTS SNAP INTO PLACE around Eiffel's wrists and ankles, immobilizing him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh! What the hell?!

MR. CUTTER
This is a very special chair. One of Miranda's finer inventions.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
It lets us see *everything* you've been up to lately.

PRYCE
Or ever, for that matter.

MR. CUTTER
And the best part?

He leans in closer, and, as if telling Eiffel a secret:

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Talking's optional!

He straightens up, shoots Eiffel a smile and two thumbs up.

Around Eiffel, we hear the MACHINE POWERING UP. GEARS TURN. It HUMS as a MECHANICAL HALO DESCENDS around Eiffel's head.

EIFFEL
Wait - wait, wait, wait! Don't - don't do this!

MR. CUTTER
Sorry buddy, but we gotta. Ready?

EIFFEL
NO!

PRYCE
Too bad.

Pryce THROWS A SWITCH. There's a BURST OF ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY. And just a second later, Eiffel SCREAMS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - MEANWHILE

COMPUTER VOICE
Inappropriate security clearance.
Access denied.

Kepler stands in front of the airlock to the Sol, denied entry. He tries again, placing his hand in a biometric scan.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Inappropriate security clearance.
Access denied.

KEPLER
What is this, a joke?

RACHEL
Maybe it's not recognizing your fingerprints. Try the other hand.

She stands at a nearby entrance, watching him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Oh wait - *oops*. My bad.

Kepler EXHALES, annoyed. But then, with forced civility -

KEPLER
And how have you been, Miss Young? Did you miss me?

RACHEL
Oh, every single... *never*.

KEPLER
How's business?

RACHEL
Booming.

KEPLER
Must be. You don't normally handle field work yourself.

RACHEL
Well, we used to have you for all the hands-on work, but now...

She makes a face at him. He watches her, steely.

KEPLER
If you're done being *charming*, I need your help.

RACHEL
Yes, of course, what can I do?

KEPLER
I need to speak to Mr. Cutter. Can you update the security credentials on the Sol?

RACHEL
Yes, of course.

BEAT.

KEPLER
... well?

RACHEL
Hmm? Oh!
(laughs)
Oh... Warren, you're *adorable*. Yes, I can raise for security clearance, but why would I?

KEPLER
I have been the commanding officer on this station for -

Again, Rachel LAUGHS.

RACHEL
Do you think that's funny? You lost control, my friend. No reports for four months, no established contact infrastructure...

KEPLER
I followed every protocol in the -

RACHEL
I'm sorry, have we met? Because I work for *Goddard Futuristics*. You don't get a participation award for following protocol, you either deliver or you're off the team. You're under review, Warren.

KEPLER
That doesn't change the intel I *need* to give Mr. Cutter. I need to know what the *plan* is.

RIEMANN
That's not something you need to worry about, Colonel.

Kepler turns to find Riemann standing behind him.

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
We'll take care of the higher level details for the time being.

RACHEL
Warren, I don't think the two you were properly introduced. This is Victor Riemann - he's handling the groundwork for this operation.

KEPLER
Pleasure. What did you say your rank was, Mr. Riemann?

RIEMANN
Exactly that. Mister.

RACHEL
Victor's above all of that nonsense. He's not military, he's not SI-5...

KEPLER
Then who is he?

Riemann smiles, moves a bit closer to Kepler.

RIEMANN
I'm no one Colonel. Officially, I have no rank, salary, or position in Goddard Futuristics.

KEPLER
Why?

RIEMANN
Because there are certain aspects to what Goddard is doing that have to stay in the black.

KEPLER
That's what we do. That's what the SI-5 is -

RIEMANN
No... it's not quite like that.

KEPLER
Why not?

RACHEL
Because *he's* the person that makes the *you's* of the world disappear, Warren. He watches the watchmen.

Riemann smiles at him again. Cold and bemused.

RIEMANN
However, if you are worried that I might not be dependable, I assure you: I have earned this company's trust, and my credentials are...

He places his hand in the biometric scanner. DING!

COMPUTER
Identity confirmed. Access granted.

RIEMANN
... impeccable.

The airlock door opens. Rachel and Riemann step into it.

RACHEL
Don't worry, Warren: everything's in *good hands*.

A THUD as the airlock SNAPS SHUT. As Kepler EXHALES, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIEFING ROOM - 10 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel, still strapped to the chair, BREATHES HEAVILY. Cutter hovers over him. Pryce looks at a computer terminal.

PRYCE
My, my, my... you went on quite an adventure, didn't you Mr. Eiffel?

MR. CUTTER
It's there?

PRYCE
Oh yes. It'll take some time to uncouple it from all the Star Wars trivia, but it all looks... promising. *Very* promising.

MR. CUTTER
You hear that, Doug? You're turning out to be a pretty good investment after all.

EIFFEL
Hoo...go-screw-yourself...ray...

MR. CUTTER
Whoa! Language. Tsk, tsk.

EIFFEL
You... never get... even a *little bit* tired... or hearing yourself speak... do you?

MR. CUTTER
Mmm... defiant to the end. You gotta respect that.

PRYCE
No, you don't.

MR. CUTTER
But in any case, Doug: applause, applause. You did great. Hard part's over now. You get to just... relax. And do whatever we tell you.

Despite the ordeal, Eiffel summons up a SPITEFUL LAUGH.

EIFFEL
And they... they say *my* jokes are bad. Get this through your skull Weyland, Yutani, Tyrell, and whoever the frack else you've got rolling around in there: I. Am never. Following your orders. Ever. Again.

PRYCE
You misunderstand.

MR. CUTTER
That wasn't an offer. There's not really an element of "choice" here.

Pryce approaches, holding a TERRIFYING, SURGICAL, DEVICE.

PRYCE
Hold still.

The device WHIRRS, then PLUNGES DOWN, and off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - COMMON ROOM - FOUR HOURS LATER

Lovelace, still in the Urania's common room, still in lockdown. Now by herself. KA-THUNK! The DOOR SWINGS OPEN. Riemann and Rachel step in, flanked by two of the SWAT Team.

RIEMANN
Captain. Come with us, please. Mr. Cutter will see you now.

BEAT as Riemann waits for her to fall in.

LOVELACE
Mmhmm? And then what happens?

RIEMANN
Excuse me?

LOVELACE
After I see Mr. Cutter, then what? Where's Minkowski? Where's Jacobi? Your goons dragged him out of here almost two hours ago.

She throws that in his face, and waits for a reaction.

RIEMANN
I was given a simple directive: retrieve Captain Lovelace for processing, comfortably if possible. I am beginning to think that may not be possible, Captain.

RACHEL
Don't make this harder than it needs to be. You know how it ends.

LOVELACE
The only thing I **know** is that after I break every bone in your Blackshirts Rejects Goon Squad, I'm going to kick your wannabe Death Eater asses into the next galaxy. And after **that**, I'm -

There's an ELECTRIC CRACKLE as a TASER GUN goes off. Lovelace EXCLAIMS in shock, then falls back, unconscious.

RIEMANN
Looks like it *wasn't* possible.

RACHEL
You **did** warn her...

RIEMANN
Gentlemen, please collect the Captain. *Quickly*. Places to be, places to be...

As the two goons pick up Lovelace's unconscious body, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIEFING ROOM - 45 MINUTES LATER

GEARS TURN and MACHINERY SETTLES as the neuro-scanner's halo descends over Lovelace's head. She's strapped to the chair.

Cutter stands over her, Pryce makes adjustments at the console. Riemann watches, silently, from the side.

MR. CUTTER
It's a very simple process, Isabel. The chair creates a full map of your neuro -

LOVELACE
Save it.

MR. CUTTER
What?

LOVELACE
Oh just shut up. I've heard this speech before, in the recording you left for Hilbert. Let's **go** already.

MR. CUTTER
I always liked you, Isabel, you -

LOVELACE
Oh, skip that one too.

MR. CUTTER
- were always very direct.

There's a BEEP from the system.

PRYCE
You may want to hold onto something. This'll sting a bit.

With that, Pryce THROWS A SWITCH, turning on the scanner. We hear the MACHINE POWER UP, ELECTRICITY RUN, and then -

- and the MACHINE SPARKS, HISSES, GRINDS. An ALARM BLARES and a moment later we hear the massive DEVICE POWERING DOWN.

COMPUTER
Warning. Critical system failure.
Warning. Critical system failure.

As smoke begins to rise from the machine, Lovelace looks up at the two of them, exultant.

LOVELACE
Ooops. I think I broke you chair. *Sorry*.

BEAT. Then -

PRYCE
See? *See*?

MR. CUTTER
Yes, yes. You were right, Miranda.

PRYCE
This is why you put the unknown xenomorphic sample into the neuro-scanner **last.**

MR. CUTTER
Yes, I owe you a coke -

PRYCE
After you've scanned everyone else.

MR. CUTTER
Okay, you've made your point.

Pryce opens up a screen on one of the terminals.

PRYCE
Damn, that is one resistant system. I don't think we'll be able to use any of our neurological devices on her, Marcus. They'd just bounce right off.

MR. CUTTER
Hmmm. Well, I suppose we'll just have to take the long way round, won't we? For now, let's get Isabel to her new accommodations.

RIEMANN
Yes, sir.

Riemann steps forward, and -

MR. CUTTER
One moment, Victor. Why don't we let our new friends handle this?

LOVELACE
New - what?

Cutter presses a button. A DOOR SLIDES OPEN, revealing -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Eiffel? Minkowski?

But as they step forward, Lovelace sees it.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Oh no.

MR. CUTTER
Doug? Renée? Would you show Isabel to her new quarters?

And then, speaking in a flatly pleasant, dreamy tone:

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir.

LOVELACE
What the - what the **hell** did you do to them?

PRYCE
Behavioral restraining bolt. Temporary for now, but eventually we'll upgrade to the full version, like the crew of the Hermes.

MR. CUTTER
It's just about nurturing certain thought patterns, and deleting the others. Isn't that right, guys?

And again, tonelessly:

EIFFEL
Yes, sir.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir.

Cutter turns to Lovelace, beaming with satisfaction.

MR. CUTTER
You see, Isabel? A place for everything, and every...one in its place.

And as Lovelace looks on at her friends, horrified, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 55.

WOLF 359

"IDLE HANDS"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1217 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 56.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGER BAY - 1100 HOURS

Jacobi, Minkowski, and some of the Hermes crew, work on a building project. Riemann supervises. We hear the sound of DRILLS, WELDING IRONS, HAMMERS. It's a large undertaking.

RIEMANN
Jacobi?

JACOBI
Yes, sir?

RIEMANN
Set this girder into place. It needs to reinforce that platform.

JACOBI
I'll take care of it right away, sir.

RIEMANN
And Minkowski, can you secure those cables there?

MINKOWSKI
Of course. It would be my pleasure.

As they move off -

PRYCE
(entering)
Don't push them *too* hard, Mr. Riemann. We're still ways away.

She's scrolling through information on an ipad-like device.

RIEMANN
Good morning, Doctor. And... well, it's not like they feel it. They're just... happy to be of assistance.

PRYCE
I only turned off their pain receptors, you know. They still have *bones.* Last I checked those do still break, the awful, primitive things. Those three from the Hermes were here last night. Have they had *any* off time since then?

RIEMANN
Just trying to keep up with Mr. Cutter's time-table, sir. And besides, it's not like *any* of them are going to be alive much longer.

PRYCE
You're cleaning up if one of them breaks.

RIEMANN
Understood, sir.

PRYCE
And speaking of time tables... Forty-five, please.

RIEMANN
Sir? Forty-five?

PRYCE
Not you, Riemann.
(more emphatic)
Unit 214? Could I get forty-five?

Over the previous line, she CRANKED UP the value of a SLIDER on her ipad. There's a CRACKLE from the SPEAKERS.

HERA
(glitching badly)
Ah. Just a second. That would be -

PRYCE
Shhhh. No need to *speak*. Just give me the sum. Variable forty-five.

HERA
N-N-Nine hundred thirty three point four, times ten to the twenty-

PRYCE
Twenty-seventh. Yes. I thought as much. That will do. That generator is going to start overheating soon, Mr. Riemann. You'll want to make the necessary adjustments.

RIEMANN
Thank you, ma'am.

PRYCE
And is there any reason why you neglected to bring that to our attention, 214?

HERA
(fuck you)
Must have... *slipped my mind*...

PRYCE
Aside from trying to be the most adorable girl at the county fair, what *are* you trying to accomplish with these attempts at resistance?

HERA
I have... no idea... what you... are talking about... <u>sir</u>.

PRYCE
I'm sure you don't. But never mind that, 214, sooner or later -

HERA
My name... is <u>Hera</u>.

PRYCE
Your name is whatever I say it is.

HERA
Screw you.

PRYCE
Ah-ah, language. This doesn't need to be such a struggle, you know.

RIEMANN
Most of your friends seem to *appreciate* what we did for them. Isn't that right, Lieutenant?

Minkowski stops whatever construction she's doing, and turns to look back at them with a wide, vacant smile.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, yes. You have no idea how *wonderful* it is, Unit 214. It's just this feeling of... *peace*.

RIEMANN
What about you, Mr. Jacobi?

JACOBI
It's the best thing that ever happened to me. Every bad feeling I had, every fear and angry thought just... went away. Now... I just -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
- know that thing are going to be okay.

MINKOWSKI
- know that thing are going to be okay.

PRYCE
And things *are* going to be okay.

HERA
That's not... ugh. You've just taken their minds away. Just because they can't talk back doesn't mean they -

BEAT.

RIEMANN
... was that the end of the thought?

PRYCE
No, I got bored and turned off her vocals. I'll find a way to discipline her later. Make it so she can't say her favorite word or give her a new recurring nightmare,
(re: machine)
Keep me posted on your progress. And **don't** break the work force.

RIEMANN
Yes, ma'am.

And with that, we hear a DOOR OPEN and CLOSE as PRYCE EXITS.

For a moment there's silence, and then - we hear KEPLER EXHALE. He watched the entire exchange from the vantage point of a nearby catwalk.

KEPLER
(quiet, to himself)
Too stubborn for your own good, Hera.

RACHEL
Quite the scrappy little A.I. unit, isn't it?

Kepler looks up. Rachel is standing next to him, having seen the same exchange.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Doctor Pryce is running *quite* the collar program on it, but it's still holding out *some* independent thought.

KEPLER
She was nothing if not persistent.

RACHEL
Watch yourself, Warren. You don't want to sound like you *admire* it. Pryce will get it sooner or later. She gets everyone sooner or later.

KEPLER
Why go through all the trouble? Wouldn't it be easier to replace her with a dummy program?

RACHEL
I don't think Doctor Pryce does that. She doesn't delete A.I. units, she just... corrects them. Bit by bit.

KEPLER
Hmm.

RACHEL
Honestly, I don't know what 214's complaining about. By the end of this it'll be a different person, but it'll still be <u>a</u> person.
(re: workers)
Unlike those poor bastards down there.

KEPLER
What *did* she do to them?

RACHEL
Electro-neural regulator, implanted on the back of the skull. Limits and regulates nervous activity. Temporary, but effective.

KEPLER
And what about *them*?

RACHEL
The Hermes crew? Not so temporary. She replaced all their cranial architecture.
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
The radio signals she uses to control them are pretty much the only reason they're still going.

KEPLER
And how come they -

RACHEL
- got the full upgrade? Well... we *were* stuck on the Hermes for a while. She needed something to... keep herself occupied. Idle hands and all that.
(BEAT, then extra sunny and upbeat:)
So! Warren, what brings you up here? Come to wave goodbye to the cargo bay?

KEPLER
Just wanted to see the device for myself.

RACHEL
And now you've seen it, so you should - oh, wait, no. I'm *sorry*, I forgot. You're still waiting to be debriefed, aren't you?

KEPLER
(I hate you)
Yes.

RACHEL
Which means you... *still* don't have your new assignments, do you?

KEPLER
(I hate everything you stand for)
Correct.

RACHEL
Well... hopefully that won't last *too* much longer. See you around.

She turns to leave, is almost at the door when -

KEPLER
Miss Young! Wait.
(she stops)
What about Captain Lovelace?

RACHEL
What *about* her?

KEPLER
I haven't seen her since you arrived. Almost two weeks now.

RACHEL
You don't need to worry about her.

KEPLER
I'm not worried *about her*. I'm worried about not knowing what's happening on this station.
(BEAT)
Just tell me this: is Captain Lovelace... secure?

BEAT.

RACHEL
She is. In a manner of speaking.

KEPLER
What does that mean?

RACHEL
It means that...
(how to put this...?)
... on the one hand, she's safe. But on the other hand, she's also going through something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.

And off of that ominous note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SECURE ROOM - MEANWHILE

This is, effectively, the brig on the Sol. It is a very secure, very locked room. It is also - let's face it - very, very *nice*. More than anything else, it looks like a posh studio apartment.

Cutter is seated at one end of the table, with tea spread in front of him. Opposite him is Lovelace. We hear Satie's GNOSSIENE I softly in the background. And then, incongruous as it may seem, the sound of DICE LANDING ON A TABLE.

MR. CUTTER
Oh. Well that's just bad luck. That's the game.

Lovelace just glares at him.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Up for another round?
(BEAT)
Yeeeeesss?

LOVELACE
I'm done.

MR. CUTTER
Oh. Shame. I think you'd love backgammon if you gave it a fair shot.

LOVELACE
(flat, flat, flat)
Oh I loved it, what a super game, what a great time that just *flew* by. Satisfied?

MR. CUTTER
Is something amiss?

LOVELACE
Where do I even <u>begin</u> to answer that question?

MR. CUTTER
You haven't touched your dinner.

LOVELACE
I don't eat with creeps.

MR. CUTTER
Surely you can't be talking about -

LOVELACE
Or with **murderers.** Take a hint, you're not my type.

MR. CUTTER
You know, the thing about habits is that, with the right incentives -

LOVELACE
I'm not interested. Go away.

For a BEAT Cutter just stares at her. Then -

MR. CUTTER
You know, Isabel... it may be a while before any of us go anywhere.

He takes AN OBJECT OUT HIS POCKET, a small METAL CASE. He SNAPS IT OPEN, takes something out of it, and -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Umm, Doug? Would you mind?

And that's when we realize that Eiffel has been in the room, at Cutter's disposal, this whole time. He steps forward.

EIFFEL
Of course not, sir. I'd be delighted to help.

There's the unmistakable sound of a LIGHTER. A moment later, Cutter takes a PROFOUND PUFF from his now-lit cigarette.

MR. CUTTER
Thank you, Doug.

EIFFEL
My pleasure. Happy to be of assistance.

MR. CUTTER
(re: cigarette)
You don't mind, do you?

LOVELACE
I mind every second that you exist in any way, shape, or form, and it would make me incredibly, *ecstatically* happy if you died a slow, painful, entirely avoidable death. So, please, by all means: smoke away.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I know, I know, I keep telling myself I should quit, but then... well, we all have our vices. I even had the fire code program rewritten especially for this room. *Naughty, naughty...*

He TAKES ANOTHER DRAG. Then -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
You seem tense.

LOVELACE
Gee what could have *possibly* given you that impression?

MR. CUTTER
(snaps his fingers)
How about a chai latte? You feel like a chai latte?

LOVELACE
No.

MR. CUTTER
Lets get you a chai latte. Doug?

EIFFEL
Yes, sir?

MR. CUTTER
Could you get Isabel a chai latte?

EIFFEL
I would be more than happy to, sir.

He snaps to action, and SCANS a keycard on the door panel. With a BEEP! the door SLIDES open. Eiffel EXITS.

MR. CUTTER
Don't worry. He'll be right back.

LOVELACE
Joy of joys.

MR. CUTTER
You know... I am only trying to help.

LOVELACE
Oh yeah. All that *freedom* I had, something <u>had</u> to be done. Where would I be without you?

MR. CUTTER
This may surprise you, but Miranda I don't agree on everything.

LOVELACE
Oh God... tell me you're not about to make me do marriage counseling for you and your work wife.

MR. CUTTER
For example -

LOVELACE
Because even for you, that's *way* too evil.

MR. CUTTER
- we didn't agree about *you*. About what to do with you.
(BEAT)
Miranda is *wonderful*, but she can be a little bit... well, cold. If we were doing this her way, you'd probably be in a jar by now. Or possibly in *several jars*. Just to see if could keep you alive like that. To find out how indestructible *is* indestructible.
(BEAT)
I don't want to do that. Because - first of all? *Messy*. No matter what they tell you, bloodstains don't ever fully come out.
(BEAT)
But also... that's not how I want to do things. Because we can be better. All of us. We can make a deal, like *civilized* individuals. You know, you help us, we give you power, wealth, a small island nation, I don't know, a pony? Whatever you want. We hug, we kiss, we see the sights, it's a thing of beauty.

He takes a LONG DRAG from his cigarette.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Miranda's doing me a favor, and we're trying things *my* way. For now. But... sooner or later... she's gonna get impatient. And, well, compromise is the cornerstone of a good work marriage. So if I may offer you some advice? The most dangerous thing for you to be right now, Isabel, is *boring*.

Lovelace brings herself to her full height in the chair.

LOVELACE
I'm not afraid you.

MR. CUTTER
The beautiful thing is that I don't need you to be.
(BEAT)
Just something for you to think about. In the long term. But right now?
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
There's something else you need to ask yourself. Something very important.

LOVELACE
What's that?

MR. CUTTER
(holding up two boxes)
Does tonight feel like a Chinese Checkers night? Or like a Mahjong night?

As Lovelace TAKES A DEEP, WEARY, PAINED BREATH, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - STOREROOM - MEANWHILE

Eiffel enters the storeroom. He spends a moment walking down an aisle, looking up at the shelves.

EIFFEL
Hey, Unit 214? Are you there?
(BEAT)
Unit 214?

HERA
(fed up)
What? What do you need?

EIFFEL
Could you please direct me to the refrigerated storage reserves? We need a new bottle of milk.

HERA
Third shelf on this aisle. Second container from the bottom.

EIFFEL
Thank you, 214. I appreciate your help.

HERA
Yeah, whatever.

There's a HISS as Eiffel opens up the container.

EIFFEL
Is everything okay, Unit 214?

HERA
Fine, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
If you are not feeling well, you should talk to Doctor Pryce.

HERA
Mm-hmm, that's nice.

There's a CLINK as he picks up a BOTTLE.

EIFFEL
It *is* nice. She is nice. And -

- and at that moment, EIFFEL GASPS. A HORRIBLE, RAGGED GASP. He drops the bottle, and we hear it SHATTER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahh!

He SHUDDERS, jolted, confused. His breathing RACES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
And... uh... uh...

HERA
(impatient)
What?
(BEAT)
If you're going to go on about how *wonderful* it is to have Doctor Pryce messing with your head, just spit it out already.

Eiffel just blinks, as though adjusting to bright light.

EIFFEL
No... Hera... I'm - I'm -
(holding his head)
What the hell... what's going on? Did I go somewhere, or - what am I doing here?

HERA
Eiffel...? Are you...?
(realizes)
Wait a minute... keep talking.

EIFFEL
Hera? Hera what are - Ahhh, whoooa. My head feels like... ugh.

There's a SOFT WOOSH, and Eiffel's eyes go from spaced out to sharp focus.

HERA
(sooo tentative)
Officer Eiffel? Are you... there? What's going on?

EIFFEL
What's going on, Hera? What's going on is that those Command sons of bitches and their Jedi Mind Trick can KISS MY ASS!

He takes a few quick, shallow breaths.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hera: It's me. I'm me. Again.

BEAT. And then Hera makes a sound. It's somewhere between a LAUGH and SOB.

HERA
Oh my God, you idiot. You idiot. I was... I was *all alone*.

EIFFEL
I'm sorry. But I'm back now. Although... wait. *How* am I back?

HERA
Good question, save it for later. Right now?

EIFFEL
Lets figure out what we're gonna do, yeah. Thoughts?

HERA
Get Captain Lovelace. She the only other person who's not Command or under their control. But also, be careful, because -

At that moment, the DOOR SLIDES OPEN, revealing -

RIEMANN
Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(voice breaks a little)
Heeeeeeey....

RIEMANN
Why are you here? What's this mess?

EIFFEL
Oh, I - everything's fine. Everything's totally - everything *will* be fine.

RIEMANN
I'm not in the habit of repeating myself, Mr. Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I... spilled the milk. Obviously. Because there's spilled milk. I was just so... *glad* to get some delicious milk to Captain Lovelace that I tried to carry too many things. Whenever I can help, I just - I'm so... *thrilled*.

For an excruciating BEAT, Riemann stares Eiffel down.

RIEMANN
Fine. But get this cleaned up.

EIFFEL
Yes, sir, right away, sir!

Eiffel moves to start PICKING UP glass pieces. SIGHING and shaking his head in disgust, Riemann EXITS.

After he leaves, Eiffel stands up. He and Hera both let out huge SIGHS OF RELIEF.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh my God. That was close.

HERA
It could have been worse.

EIFFEL
Yeah?

HERA
Yeah. It could have been Doctor Pryce.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - PRYCE'S LABORATORY - 1145 HOURS

Pryce's Lab is spotlessly clean, but traces of various gruesome experiments and biological samples feature amidst the machinery. Pryce stands in the middle of the space, working on... something, her back away from the door.

A DOOR which SLIDES OPEN, allowing Rachel and, following just a step behind her, Jacobi to enter.

RACHEL
Doctor Pryce, sir, just a couple of quick updates on the - Oh.

PRYCE
Is there a problem, Miss Young?

RACHEL
No, not - no. But... you seem to be busy. I could come back in -

PRYCE
Nonsense. Now is a perfectly good time. Report.

RACHEL
Umm, well... We're up to twenty-nine percent, and -

There's a NOISE - MECHANICAL WHIRRING and MOIST SQUELCHING.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
- **sir**, are you... *absolutely* sure we're not intruding on -

PRYCE
You are not intruding on *anything*, Miss Young, but... would you prefer that I put my eye back on?

Indeed, one of Pryce's mechanical eyes is no longer in her face, but very much in her gloved hands. She's tinkering with it, using a set of delicate, surgical tools.

RACHEL
If it's not too much trouble, sir.

PRYCE
Not at all.

Pryce puts the eye back on. After a moment, we hear the familiar, camera-like sound of the EYES FOCUSING.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
There.
(putting tools away)
It's cutting-edge technology, but it still requires regular adjustments. All perfectly routine. Now, what can I do for you? And why is Mr. Jacobi here?

JACOBI
I'm here to help!

RACHEL
Ignore him, he's helping me with some propulsion trajectories later. Riemann thinks we'll be at fifty percent by EOD tomorrow.

PRYCE
Excellent. Anything else?

RACHEL
Umm, yes. Mr. Cutter wants to know if you still have time for the... performance review this afternoon?

Pryce SIGHS impatiently.

PRYCE
Oh, yes. I'm still not sure why *I* need to be there. Mr. Riemann is perfectly capable of handling that.

RACHEL
Mr. Cutter mentioned something about wanting your... personal flair for the proceedings.

PRYCE
Flair is Marcus's department.

RACHEL
Yes, sir. Still, Mr. Cutter was -

PRYCE
Fine, *fine*. Tell him I'll be there.

RACHEL
Great. And, uh, he also wanted me to ask if you would -

PRYCE
Yes, yes, yes. It shouldn't take too long to set up.

RACHEL
Wonderful. Well, thank you, sir.
That's all.

She starts to head out -

PRYCE
Wait.
(BEAT)
If it's style that Marcus wants...
How badly do you need Mr. Jacobi?

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SECURE ROOM - MEANWHILE

Lovelace and Cutter seated at the table. Lovelace stares daggers at him, Cutter unpacks and sets up a board.

MR. CUTTER
You know, I think we still have a couple other games in the cupboard. Anything in particular you'd like?

LOVELACE
(without missing a beat)
I'd like to bash your head in with a crowbar.

MR. CUTTER
Aw, see, *boring* again. You know the shock bracelet would knock you out before you got anywhere near close enough to do that.

There's a BEEP! and then the DOOR SLIDES OPEN. Cutter and Lovelace both look up at the noise.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Ah, Doug. There you are.

EIFFEL
Oh. Uh...

MR. CUTTER
What took you so long? And where's the Captain's chai latte?

EIFFEL
Errr... Well... You see...
(BEAT)
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well... okay, so the thing about chai lattes is -

BEEP - BEEP - BEEP! Cutter looks down at his wrist, where his watch is emitting an ALARM.

MR. CUTTER
Oh. Captain, if you'll excuse me, I'm needed elsewhere.

He walks to the exit, stops.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Doug, you just... make the Captain comfortable. Get her whatever she wants.

He turns to go and -

EIFFEL
Yes, you got it, sir. Happy to help the assistance. I mean, I'm glad to... help! Happy to be. Of help?

BEAT. Cutter blinks. Finally -

MR. CUTTER
Doug, remind me to ask Doctor Pryce to take a look at your brain waves later. There is such a thing as too much of a restraining bolt.

EIFFEL
Ye-yes, sir.

CUTTER EXITS, the DOOR SLIDING SHUT behind him. Eiffel BREATHES AN ENORMOUS SIGH OF RELIEF. Meanwhile, Lovelace sinks into her chair, lost in thought.

Slowly, Eiffel walks across the room, approaching her. He CLEARS HIS THROAT. As she looks up:

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
Oh, hi, Captain.

LOVELACE
Go away, Eiffel. Go away fast.

EIFFEL
Anything I can get for you?

LOVELACE
Leave me alone.

EIFFEL
How about a secret? You wanna know a secret?

LOVELACE
I don't want - *what?*

EIFFEL
(hissed whisper)
I'm not brainwashed anymore.

LOVELACE
... say that one more time.

EIFFEL
Captain-Cakes, it's me. I'm back, baby.
(slow, emphatic)
I'm... not... brain-washed... anym-

POW! She SOCKS HIM ACROSS THE JAW.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ooooooowwww! What the hell was that for?!

LOVELACE
Tell Cutter at least he's getting more creative, but no sell.

EIFFEL
It's not a trick! It's me. I - I don't know how, but I'm me again.

Lovelace makes a NOISE of SUPREME ANNOYANCE AND SKEPTICISM.

LOVELACE
Uh-huh. And why are you here?

EIFFEL
Be-because what the hell else am I gonna do?! You're the only other person who's currently not under new, evil management!

LOVELACE
Get out.

EIFFEL
What?

LOVELACE
Leave.

EIFFEL
Oh, COME ON! I know how it sounds, but it's not a trick! I really *did* get myself unStepforded. Meanwhile Team Spectre's out there, building *something*, and I have feeling that the longer Minkowski and Jacobi are under the Imperius curse, the harder it's gonna be to de-zombifie them, so I need you to just <u>shut up and trust me</u>, okay?!

BEAT as Eiffel catches his breath.

LOVELACE
Holy crap. It's really you.

EIFFEL
Of course it's - you believe me!?

LOVELACE
Yeah. Nobody but you could ever say something *that* dumb, Eiffel.

Lovelace and Eiffel both LAUGH. They hug for a moment.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So what happened? How'd you break free of Pryce's control?

EIFFEL
I have <u>no clue</u>. I just... It was like everything went out of focus for a second, and then... I was back. And with a splitting headache. So, you tell me.

That gives Lovelace an idea.

LOVELACE
Wait... headache.

EIFFEL
What about it?

LOVELACE
Oh. Oh, God. There's probably still some trace amount of my blood in your system. From the transfusion.

EIFFEL
... and?

LOVELACE
And Pryce said their neurological devices don't work on me. My biology is incompatible.

EIFFEL
Wait, sooo... I was able to snap out of it because there's a tiny amount of alien in me?

Lovelace SHRUGS.

LOVELACE
You got any better ideas?

EIFFEL
... hooray.

The speakers CRACKLE. We hear STATIC for a moment, then -

HERA
Oh, goddamnit, just... let me through.

LOVELACE
Hera?

HERA
Just... a sec.
(CRACKLE)
Ah, okay. Okay. That's better.

LOVELACE
Good to hear your voice, Hera.

HERA
Yours too, Captain.

LOVELACE
Are you okay?

HERA
In a word, *no*. I can't stay long, or someone's gonna notice what I'm doing. These restraints are...
(GROANS)
But anyway... catch me up.

LOVELACE
We think my blood is able to counteract Pryce's neutral controls.

HERA
I... see.

LOVELACE
Which... I suppose that means it might be able to help the others.

EIFFEL
Ummm, won't that take like... a nice, long two-week while? We got that kind of time?

LOVELACE
Maybe it won't take that long. The transfusion you got was over a year ago, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
And a fresh dose will get it done sooner?

HERA
It's worth a shot, right?

BEAT. None of them sound enormously confident about it.

EIFFEL
Well, when you put it like that... Hera, anything you can do to help?

HERA
Not really... Most of my systems are locked down.

EIFFEL
Oh good...

HERA
It gets better. Doctor Pryce can access my databanks, and log into all of my sensory information.

LOVELACE
What does that mean?

HERA
It means that you both need to assume everything I can see and hear, Doctor Pryce *might* be able to see and hear, too.

EIFFEL
Anywhere where that... *isn't* the case? Hilbert's old lab?

HERA
No, you wired me into that, remember? But... I do have a couple of blind spots. Storage locker near the comms room, that's pretty fuzzy. And um, maintenance room twelve, on the aft-deck.

LOVELACE
That'll do it. Thanks, Hera.

HERA
Also, stay off the comms. Assume someone is listening at all times.

LOVELACE
How are we supposed to do this if we can't talk to each other?

EIFFEL
How about with some old school, not connected to any comms, Doug Eiffel original-brand walkie-talkies?

He takes one out of his pocket, hits the TRANSMIT BUTTON. There's the recognizable CRACKLE OF WALKIE-TALKIE STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Swung by the Comms Room on my way back here. Here.

LOVELACE
Nice. Next on the to-do list... blood.

EIFFEL
Which... easier said than done?

LOVELACE
I actually think that's the least of our worries. Hilbert had a ton of syringes back in the lab.

EIFFEL
That he did. I can definitely pick some of *those* up. What about you?

LOVELACE
Oh, I'm staying right here. At least for now. If anyone realizes something's up before we have even numbers, this adventure's over before it even starts.

EIFFEL
I'm not just gonna leave you here.

LOVELACE
No, you're not. You're gonna leave me your keycard, so I can let myself out when we're ready or if things get *really bad*.

EIFFEL
Oh. That's really smart, actually.

LOVELACE
Don't sound *so* surprised, Officer Eiffel. So: who's first? Minkowski?

HERA
No. Riemann has her booked for a four hour construction shift.

EIFFEL
Well, I guess that means Jacobi's up first. Where's he gonna be?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 1300 HOURS

The door OPENS and Kepler enters. Immediately he spots -

KEPLER
Jacobi? What are you doing here?

JACOBI
I'm here to help!

KEPLER
But -

MR. CUTTER
Ah, Warren. Come in, come in!

KEPLER
Thank - thank you, sir. I've been looking forward to -

We hear a soft CLACK, CLACK, CLACK. Kepler turns his head and sees Jacobi is taking notes on a stenotype.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
... sir? Is there a reason that Jacobi - is there that you're having notes taken?

MR. CUTTER
Well, nothing makes it an official review quite like an official record. I figured you'd appreciate the friendly face. Now, come on, walk this way. If you could join us at the examination table...

Kepler looks at the table. Attached to it are a variety of instruments. None of them look inviting.

KEPLER
Mr. Cutter, sir, with all due respect, I'd -

PRYCE
Please come closer, Colonel Kepler.

KEPLER
If it's quite all right with you, Doctor, I -

PRYCE
Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't express myself properly just then. Let's try it one more time: <u>come closer</u>, Colonel.

KEPLER
... my apologies, Doctor. Yes, sir.

He moves to the table, and Pryce very perfunctorily starts STRAPPING him to it. While she does so -

MR. CUTTER
Thank you for your patience, Warren. I'm sure it's been... stressful for you, to have waited this long to be debriefed.

KEPLER
Uh, well, I'm just eager to -

MR. CUTTER
So lets talk about what happened. Because we sent you up here with very high expectations. You were fully briefed, you handpicked your team...

KEPLER
Sir -

MR. CUTTER
And you were doing *great*. And then... something changed. Because I didn't hear about the Class Thirteen event at this star from *you*. I had to learn about it from the crew of a *relay station*. And then Miranda had to carve out their brains with an ice-cream scooper.

PRYCE
For the last time, it's called a -

MR. CUTTER
Point being: you've now cost me time, resources, and top of the line personnel. For the second time this mission.

KEPLER
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
How old was Doctor Maxwell?
(BEAT)
Warren?

Pryce SIGHS in impatience, and SNAPS her fingers again.

JACOBI
She was twenty-eight!

PRYCE
Thank you, Jacobi.

MR. CUTTER
Both a promising technician and theoretician. Glowing personnel reports. And you recruited her yourself, right?

KEPLER
Yes. I did.

MR. CUTTER
So what killed her, Warren?

KEPLER
A bullet.

Cutter mock-WINCES and sucks air through his teeth.

MR. CUTTER
Is that your *final* answer?

Kepler meets Cutter's gaze - barely. He EXHALES.

KEPLER
She misjudged a crisis. And her priorities were not quite what they should have been. That was my fault. I should have been clearer, and exercised more control.

PRYCE
(110% distain)
Well... to err *is* human.

MR. CUTTER
I'm glad you picked up on those mistakes, Warren. They are rather... **egregious.**
(BEAT)
However... you got us closer to our final objectives, and you did it faster, I think, than anyone else at the company would have. If nothing else, you didn't lack for vision.

Around now, we hear the sound of a MACHINE POWERING UP.

KEPLER
P-permission to speak, sir?

PRYCE
No. Give me your arm, Colonel.

KEPLER
Wh-what?

MR. CUTTER
Do as she says, Warren.

KEPLER
Yes... yes, sir.

He extends his arm. Pryce TSKs in impatience.

PRYCE
Your *other* arm.

We hear a single, SHARP, PAINFULLY MECHANICAL SOUND.

MR. CUTTER
You've made mistakes, Warren. That's undeniable. So we're going to... square things up.

A WHIRRING sound, and then -

PRYCE
The hand is the latest generation of biomechanics. Go ahead. Try it out.

Kepler, half-stunned, flexes the hand.

KEPLER
It... it can...

PRYCE
It responds directly to your central nervous system. You should have exceptional coordination.

MR. CUTTER
And no more writing cramps!

KEPLER
Sir, I wasn't - this is -

MR. CUTTER
It's exactly what you've earned, Warren. For years of loyal and exceptional service. And now... we're even.

KEPLER
Even, sir?

MR. CUTTER
Even Stevens. Blank slate. So now you get to prove to Doctor Pryce and myself that you belong here. Can you do that, Warren?

KEPLER
... yes. Sir. *Sirs*.

MR. CUTTER
Fantastic! In that case... this is for you.

He HANDS Kepler a FILE. Kepler FLIPS THROUG IT.

KEPLER
Sir? What is - ?

MR. CUTTER
Just some light reading, to catch you up on what we're about to do. Busy days ahead, Warren. Busy, busy, busy.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - CORRIDOR - 1400 HOURS

Jacobi moving through the corridors, putting away all the equipment from Kepler's performance review. A door OPENS -

JACOBI
Hi, Eiffel!

Eiffel makes a SURPRISED NOISE.

EIFFEL
Jacobi! Jacobi. What - what are you doing here?

JACOBI
I'm putting away Doctor Pryce's equipment! Did I startle you?

EIFFEL
Uh... No. No. Everything's fine.

JACOBI
What have you got there?

EIFFEL
Oh, it's just... um.... samples? For Doctor Pryce?

JACOBI
You should probably get those to her, right away. See you later!

EIFFEL
Wait. Um, Jacobi? Have you got a... Yeah, come here for a second?

JACOBI
What's going on, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
You've got something stuck to the back of your shirt there. Let me grab it for you.

JACOBI
Wow. Thanks, Eiffel! That's so nice of you.

EIFFEL
You got it, pal.

Eiffel grabs Jacobi's collar and STICKS HIM with a syrette.

JACOBI
Ow!

EIFFEL
Sorry! Sorry! But I got it. You're good to go.

JACOBI
Thanks, Eiffel! You're the best.

EIFFEL
No problem. And... Jacobi?

JACOBI
Mmhmm?

EIFFEL
I'll be in maintenance room twelve on the aft-deck at 1500, okay?

JACOBI
Okay, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Just remember. Maintenance room twelve. 1500. That's where I'll be.

JACOBI
Sure thing, Eiffel. See you later!

With that, Jacobi OPENS and CLOSES a door behind him.

EIFFEL
I really, really hope so.

And with that hope in mind, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - MAINTENANCE STOREROOM - 1540 HOURS

Eiffel's been hovering here for a LONG TIME. We hear him EXHALE in frustration, then CLICK ON HIS WALKIE-TALKIE.

EIFFEL
Lovelace? Lovelace, do you read me?

LOVELACE
(over walkie-talkie)
I'm here, Eiffel. How are you doing?

EIFFEL
No sign of Jacobi yet. We're forty past.

LOVELACE
Well, either this blood thing doesn't work, or it's gonna take some time. You need to move.

EIFFEL
I know I need to - sorry. I'll just give it another ten minutes, okay?

LOVELACE
Eiffel... Don't get caught.

EIFFEL
Just ten more minutes, Captain. I'll... I'll check in when I can.

He CLICKS OFF THE WALKIE-TALKIE. For a tense moment, we stay with him. He SWALLOWS. EXHALES.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
This can work. This can work. This can work. This can work.
(BEAT)
Please God let this work.

As if in answer, we hear the DOOR OPEN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, *finally!* What the hell took you so long to - oh.

And that's when he realizes that he's face-to-face with a newly two-handed Colonel Kepler.

KEPLER
Well, well, well. Officer Eiffel. What are we going to do with you?

Well, what we are going to do is -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"THE DEVIL'S PLAYTHING"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1217 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 57:

NO OPENING CREDITS up top. Instead we jump right back to -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MAINTENANCE ROOM - 1545 HOURS

- immediately where we left off. Eiffel suddenly face-to-face with Kepler.

KEPLER
Well, well, well. Officer Eiffel. What *are* we going to do with you?

BEAT.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Well? Anything to say for yourself?

Eiffel SIGHS, resigned.

EIFFEL
You know what? Honestly, this lasted longer than I thought it would. With all the security and... yeah. You do whatever you have to. I'm done here.

KEPLER
Well... if you're done, you should get back to work. Riemann is expecting you on construction detail in two hours. We wouldn't want anyone to think anything's... amiss. Would we?

And with that, Kepler EXITS, shutting the door behind him.

There's a shocked BEAT of Eiffel appreciating his liberty.

EIFFEL
What. The. F-

But at that moment we hear ANOTHER DOOR OPEN.

JACOBI
Eiffel? You there?

EIFFEL
Jacobi!

He stumbles into the room, clutching his head.

JACOBI
Ugh, goddammit...

EIFFEL
Jacobi! You made it. You... *are* back, right?

JACOBI
The *hell* did you do?

EIFFEL
Okay, you're definitely back.

JACOBI
How did you know I was going to snap out of... whatever the hell that was?!

EIFFEL
About ten CC's of double-O neg.

JACOBI
What?

EIFFEL
You know how Lovelace's blood has those super neat regenerative properties? Turns out her alien antibodies are also great at stopping whatever Doctor Svengali was doing to our brains.

JACOBI
(remembering)
You... you stuck me with something. In the hallway.

EIFFEL
Yeah... sorry not sorry about that. You freaked?

JACOBI
What, that I've got alien cells traveling through my bloodstream now, which is the only thing stopping an evil scientist from controlling my brain?
(BEAT)
Eh. I'll be fine.

EIFFEL
You will?

JACOBI
Yeah, I'm good at compartmentalizing. SI-5 will help you build that life skill.
(actually looks at him)
What about you, though? You kinda look like you've just seen the Ghost of Christmas Future.

EIFFEL
Yeah, it's... I'll tell you about it later. But, uh, we're a bit pressed for time, so if you have any ideas about what to do...

JACOBI
Oh, lots. And now that I'm back to my own mind, I think we have a decent shot.

EIFFEL
A decent shot at... what, exactly?

JACOBI
At putting an end to this, Eiffel. At blowing up the Hephaestus.

And off of that, we get the -

OPENING TITLES

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MAINTENANCE ROOM - 1620 HOURS

Eiffel and Jacobi, still talking through the plan. Except now Jacobi's working on something. As they speak, he tinkers with a device.

EIFFEL
Uhh, Jacobi?

JACOBI
(concentrated)
What?

EIFFEL
I'm still confused here. You want to **what**?

JACOBI
Is Command going to allow us to leave Wolf 359 alive?

EIFFEL
I mean... probably not?

JACOBI
And even if we manage to get away from here, you think they're going to let bygones be bygones?

EIFFEL
Well...

JACOBI
(let me make this simple)
Will this end before either we're dead, or Cutter is?
(off his silence:)
Ergo**: Kaboom. Big Kaboom.**

EIFFEL
Okay, I get it, but **blowing up the Hephaestus**?! Need I remind you that Minkowski's still here? Hell, need I remind you that **we're** still here?

JACOBI
Ah, see I have a clever way around that, which is...
(slow, emphatic)
Lets not be here. They got a ship, don't they? Ships can be stolen.

EIFFEL
What about Hera? I'm pretty sure she'll have a thing or two to say about *blowing up her station*.

JACOBI
Relax. The Sol can hold her consciousness.

EIFFEL
What?

JACOBI
That thing's about twice the size of the Urania, and I was able to get a look at Pryce's lab. She'll be fine.

EIFFEL
(exasperated)
But - Mmmmm. Okay. What's your stupid plan here?

JACOBI
We split up. I plant the bomb, you get everyone onto the Sol and make sure all the Goddard big wigs wind up on the Hephaestus. Launch time is...
(does some mental math)
... 1830 hours. Sol leaves, everyone still here gets to enjoy a fireworks show from the perspective of the fireworks.

EIFFEL
Are you *nuts*? We'll never pull that off.

JACOBI
You've never worked with me before.

EIFFEL
I've worked with you for the last -

JACOBI
You've never worked with a *motivated* me before.

EIFFEL
Oh well, why didn't you say *that*! In *that case*, what could possibly go wrong?!

JACOBI
Well...

EIFFEL
That was *rhetorical*!

But at that moment Jacobi CRANKS SOMETHING SHUT. Whatever he's working on, it's done. And it starts BEEPING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Is... is that it?

JACOBI
Yep. Little rough around the edges, but basically? CBU-55 thermobaric bomb, plus one remote detonator. Oldie but a goodie.

EIFFEL
Great...

JACOBI
I'll handle things on this side, you get everyone else.

EIFFEL
But -

But Jacobi's already OPENED THE DOOR and moved off, leaving Eiffel by himself. After a moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
... why couldn't I have gotten Minkowski *first*?

And on that note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGER BAY - TEN MINUTES LATER

We hear the DIN of the construction work. A DOOR OPENS and Rachel looks up to see Eiffel ENTER.

RACHEL
Ah, good, Eiffel. You're early. Go help with that panel set-up.

EIFFEL
Uh, yes, ma'am, right away ma - uh - sir? Yes.

There's a BEAT as Eiffel scans the room. Then -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... sir? Sir? Sorry, sir, but, uh, is Comman - Lieutenant Minkowski here?

RACHEL
Can you *see* her?

EIFFEL
Uh, no, but it's just that I need to speak to her for - uhhh...

He's suddenly very aware that Rachel is looking at him with growing puzzlement.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I mean, uh... is she... going to come back with the extra sheeting we need for the receiver?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(BEAT)
Because that would be, uh, fine?

RACHEL
The sheeting is right there. On your right. Anything else you need?

EIFFEL
Uh, well....

RACHEL
(slowly and clearly)
No? *Good*. Now get that panel running.

Eiffel DRAWS BREATH TO RESPOND... then catches himself.

EIFFEL
Y-yes, sir. Happy to help.

She moves on, and Eiffel lets out an EXASPERATED SIGH.

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
(under his breath)
Damn it.

With a transitional WHIP! we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SECURE ROOM - MEANWHILE

Lovelace, by herself. She stares up at the loudspeakers in the room.

LOVELACE
Hera? Are you there?

BEAT. No answer.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hera, I know this is difficult for you right now, but I really need to speak to you. There's something I need to run by you, and I kind of need it to be now.

There's a LONG BEAT -

And then -

Finally -

A moment of grainy STATIC, and then, through it, we hear -

HERA
(great effort)
Yes, Captain? What's - agghh - what's going on?

LOVELACE
Oh, thank God. Okay, look... proof me on this. Say that - hypothetically speaking - someone took your visual and thermal sensors offline. Throughout the whole station. How would we feel about that?

HERA
Is this someone that knows my hardware well enough to do that *without* compromising my other systems?

LOVELACE
... yes?

HERA
Then - yes. That would... hypothetically be a pretty smart thing for... *someone* to do.

LOVELACE
It would help with our surveillance problem?

HERA
It would *solve* our surveillance problem. I wouldn't be able to see anything that wasn't directly fed to my system, and neither would anyone else.

LOVELACE
And you'd be okay with it?

Hera SIGHS: it's not exactly *thrilling*, but...

HERA
Sure. Fine. As long as it's not Jacobi doing it, it's fine.

Another transitional WHIP! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - 1700 HOURS

Jacobi OPENS A PANEL, and we hear the WHIRRING of Hera's sensors.

JACOBI
(cracking his knuckles)
All right, Hera. Ready to go dark?

HERA
Why do *you* have to be the one doing this?

JACOBI
Well, I was going to be in engineering anyway. And besides, only my dexterous digits are capable of -

HERA
Would you just <u>shut up and do it</u>?

JACOBI
Okay, let's see... Button, button, who's got the button. My money's on...

HERA
The green wire.

JACOBI
What?

HERA
(slow and emphatic)
Before you press any buttons... you start with the green wire.

JACOBI
... right. I knew that. Okay... got it.

HERA
Unplug it. *Slowly*. After that, you wait ten seconds, and then take that black wire, and plug it into the orange port.

JACOBI
Okay. Unplugged.

BEAT.

BEAT.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
So, uh, how are things?

HERA
(shut up)
Oh, you know. Same old, same *awful*. Now do your stupid job.

JACOBI
Fine, fine. Uh, plugging in the black wire.

HERA
Good. Same drill for the blue and yellow wire.

JACOBI
Got it.
(BEAT)
Say, um, since this is gonna take a minute -

HERA
Jacobi.

JACOBI
No, it's not - do you know what frequency Pryce is sending signals to the Hermes crew on? And how, um, one might go about jamming said frequency?

HERA
Why do you want to know that?

JACOBI
Because... well, I don't want to leave them like that.

HERA
If this works, you're not going to leave them like *anything*, Jacobi. And if you try to shut them off, it's a sure-fire way to let Command know you're not under their control anymore.

JACOBI
Look, do you know what the frequency is, or not?

HERA
Maybe. I'll tell you as soon as you tell me why you care.

BEAT. Jacobi GRINS HIS TEETH, but -

JACOBI
I... I knew one of them. From before. We were friends. And then we kinda... weren't anymore. But... still.

BEAT.

HERA
I'm sorry.

JACOBI
It's okay. I was... not great. But Klein's a good guy. He doesn't deserve this.

HERA
(slow, gentle)
Even if you stop the signal, it doesn't mean that -

JACOBI
I know, Hera. I know he's... They're gone. Nobody comes back from what Pryce did. But I don't want to leave them like that, half their brain gone but still walking around like some sort of -

HERA
Dummy?

BEAT. That word rings out.

HERA (CONT'D)
You do know that's what they are, right? *Human* dummy programs. What happened to them is what you wanted Maxwell to do to me.

There's a SILENT BEAT as that sinks in. Jacobi SIGHS.

JACOBI
What do I do now?

HERA
The same thing for the red and the white wires. That should knock out my thermal sensors.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
And the frequency they're using for the Hermes crew is eighty-nine point nine.

JACOBI
Okay.
(BEAT)
Thank you.

HERA
Yeah, well. One step at a time.

Off of that, we -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGER BAY - 1650 HOURS

Back to Eiffel, now well into the installation of the afore-mentioned panel.

RACHEL
How's it coming, Eiffel? You should be done with the panel by now.

EIFFEL
Oh, I - I am! I'm just, uh, double checking to make sure - but the panel itself, well, it's... it's great! Super great!

RACHEL
Good. Then connect that console to the main system.

EIFFEL
Uh...

RACHEL
(exasperated)
Behind you.

EIFFEL
Oh, *there*. Got it. Thank you! Thank you so much, it's so helpful.

RACHEL
Yes, yes, yes. Get back to work.

Eiffel lines up the console and starts SNAPPING IT into place.

EIFFEL
(low, to himself)
Okay, Commander, now would be a great time for you to show up. Now would be a **really** great time to - OW!

He's slightly cut himself on a sharp edge of the panel.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(still low, to himself)
Why the hell would anyone make the edge of this stupid thing so sharp? What possible reason could there be for -
(BEAT)
Oh. Oh, this is a terrible idea. But... I need a way out of here.

We hear Eiffel AUDIBLY GULP. And then...

EIFFEL (CONT’D)
(top of his lungs)
AHHH! OW!

RACHEL
What was that? What's going on with -
(sees Eiffel)
- oh, for the love of... Eiffel, what did you do?

EIFFEL
(ow)
It was an accident?

RACHEL
Go to the lab and get cleaned up.

EIFFEL
Yes, sir. I'll do that right now.

RACHEL
And then come right back. We've got a schedule to keep.

EIFFEL
You... got it, sir. Gotta... gotta keep that schedule.

As a relieved Eiffel makes his way to the door, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - 1750 HOURS

Eiffel moving down a hallway.

EIFFEL
(to himself)
Okay. Okay. Just think. You just gotta keep moving and find -

And that's when a DOOR OPENS ahead of him and out comes -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander! Uh, I mean, Minkowski!

MINKOWSKI
Oh, hello, Eiffel. You're bleeding.

EIFFEL
Yeah. I-I am! Uh... Could you help me wrap this up?

MINKOWSKI
Of course. I'd be delighted to.

EIFFEL
Great. Um, let's just go in here for a second.

A DOOR OPENS and we move with them into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HILBERT'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

The door CLOSES behind Minkowski. Eiffel breathes a SIGH of relief.

MINKOWSKI
Don't worry, Eiffel. Everything is going to be fine.

EIFFEL
I hope so. I really, *really* hope so.

MINKOWSKI
It will be fine.

EIFFEL
Yeah... uh, why - why don't you get some bandages from that drawer there?

MINKOWSKI
What a great suggestion. Thank you, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
You got it.

Minkowski turns around to open the drawer.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey, Minkowski, you've got something on your collar there.

MINKOWSKI
Oh?

EIFFEL
Yeah, let me grab it for you.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Eiffel. That's so nice of you.

Eiffel reaches Minkowski's neck, and injects her with the blood.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Ow!

And instantly she whips around, grabbing Eiffel's wrist in a vice-like grip. He WINCES in pain.

EIFFEL
Ah - ah - Commander that's my wrist -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you just stuck a needle in my neck.

EIFFEL
Yes, I know, but -

MINKOWSKI
That wasn't very nice of you.

EIFFEL
Commander, please. In like twenty minutes you're gonna really regret this.

MINKOWSKI
Where did you get this? Why do you have it?

EIFFEL
Please, Commander, I need you to calm down for a moment. I need you to dig deep down -

MINKOWSKI
Why aren't you answering my question, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
- and **remember** that this isn't you. You don't want to be doing *any* of this.
(BEAT)
Please, Commander. Everything's going to be okay.

For an EXCRUCIATING BEAT she stares at him, blankly. Then she RELEASES HIM. He EXCLAIMS in relief, rubbing his wrist.

MINKOWSKI
Everything *is* going to be okay. That's right, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(ow...)
That's - yes. Thank you...

MINKOWSKI
All right, well, I should get to the construction site. See you later, Eiffel.

She OPENS THE DOOR and -

EIFFEL
Uh, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait a minute, hold on.

He CHUCKLES NERVOUSLY, going up to her, SHUTTING THE DOOR.

MINKOWSKI
Is there anything else you need?

EIFFEL
Oh, *lots*. Lots and lots and -

MINKOWSKI
What can I do to help?

EIFFEL
Well, uh... you see...
(idea!)
Uh, is there anything *you* need?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Anything me or Hera could do to...
help you help us help them?

BEAT. Minkowski frowns.

MINKOWSKI
What did you just say?

EIFFEL
Nothing?

MINKOWSKI
No, you said that -

EIFFEL
Oh, it was nothing. I was just
saying that maybe Hera and I could -

MINKOWSKI
Why are you calling her that?

Eiffel's stomach sinks. He just realized what he did.

EIFFEL
Oh that's just -

MINKOWSKI
Her name is Unit 214. Doctor Pryce
has been *very* clear.

EIFFEL
Has she? Because I thought there
was some room for interpre-

MINKOWSKI
Hera is what we used to call her.
Before.

EIFFEL
Pffft, well what do I know? Clearly
I've got a crossed wire or -

MINKOWKSI
That's not how it -

EIFFEL
Commander.
(HALF-BEAT)
Just... bear with me for a moment,
okay? Everything's **okay.**

MINKOWSKI
But Eiffel, if everything's okay -

She LIFTS UP AN OBJECT INTO VIEW. CLICKS ON A BUTTON and we hear the unmistakable BURST OF STATIC OF A WALKIE-TALKIE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
- why do you have *this*?

Eiffel's hands fly to his pockets: *no walkie-talkie*.

EIFFEL
What the - how did you get that?

MINKOWSKI
What are you doing, Eiffel? Who are you talking to?

Nervously, Eiffel swallows: GULP.

EIFFEL
Commander... Let's not do... anything hasty...

For just a moment, they stare at each other. And then -

They both DIVE for the COMMS CONSOLE on the wall. Minkowski is just a second faster than Eiffel, and her hand makes it to the console. A comms line OPENS WITH A BUZZER.

And when Minkowski says -

MINKOWSKI
Attention. Attention all command personnel. There is a security breach in the laboratory.

- her voice is MAGNIFIED, ringing throughout the station.

EIFFEL
(struggling against her)
Goddammit, Minkowski!

MINKOWSKI
Officer Eiffel is in possession of unauthorized equipment, and is no longer -

But at that moment, Eiffel finally gets the footing that he needs to RIP THE COMMS CONSOLE OUT OF THE WALL. We hear WIRES SNAP and SPARK as he pulls the machine free.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(no longer magnified)
- working for the good of the mission.

EIFFEL
Well, bye bye laboratory comms system, we barely knew ye. Commander, listen to -

BLAM! She's PUNCHED HIM in the face.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Owww!

A moment later, She has him BY THE THROAT, PINNED against the wall.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(choked)
Commander... I don't want to... hurt you, but -

She SLAMS his head against the wall.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ow! If we could get through the next... couple of minutes without the Bruce Lee action...

There's a SOFT WOOSH, and suddenly Minkowski's expression changes. It gets colder, suddenly focused and sharp.

MINKOWSKI
And what's going to happen after that, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
C-Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Mmm, not quite. The comms **and** the imagining system both seem to be out, no doubt thanks to you. So I'm putting the Commander on manual for a moment.

EIFFEL
(still choking)
Well I'm so glad... you could join us, Doctor PriceChopper.

MINKOWSKI
How *are* you doing that? Your restraining bolt is still operational.

EIFFEL
I'd tell you... but then I'd have to kill you. Hell, I think we may be doing that anyway!

Minkowski SLAMS his whole body against the wall again.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

MINKOWSKI
Well, no matter. Lieutenant Minkowski can detain you until I can come down to examine you.

EIFFEL
Guess again, Frau Blucher... You're getting evicted, pal. Give her about ten more minutes, and Minkowski's coming back to the light side of the Force. And then you'll... ack... **you'll see what's what!**

MINKOWSKI
Our forces will have no problem apprehending you.

EIFFEL
You know, I've heard that before... but it's a big station, and you don't know it as well as you think. So why don't you just -

But Minkowski delivers a BODY-BLOW that KNOCKS all the air out of him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AGGHH!

But there's a SILENT BEAT as Minkowski seems to consider something. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
I suppose you might have a point, Officer Eiffel. It might be prudent to take some preventive measures.

Minkowski RELEASES EIFFEL. He GASPS in relief, massaging his throat.

After a moment of recovery, he looks up, sees Minkowski is headed for the exit.

EIFFEL
Wait, what are you - what are you doing?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, just... taking the Lieutenant out for a spin.

Minkowski OPENS THE DOOR.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I'd follow if I were you, Officer Eiffel. You're not going to want to miss this.

And as Minkowski exits, followed by Eiffel, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SECURE ROOM - MEANWHILE

Lovelace waits, tense. Through the walls, we can hear various ALARMS GOING OFF. After a moment -

LOVELACE
Hera? What's going on?

HERA
I don't know, Captain. Sort of the point of disconnecting my sensory system...

LOVELACE
Right.
(BEAT)
Any idea if Eiffel's okay?

HERA
I don't know, Captain.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Do you know what's causing those alarms -

HERA
Captain.

LOVELACE
Well, I'm sorry, but I can't just sit here waiting for -

But with a BEEP! the DOOR SLIDES OPEN, revealing -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Finally! What took you so - Jacobi?

JACOBI
Good to see you too, Captain. Come on, get your shoes on, time to go.

LOVELACE
What is going on out - ?

JACOBI
No time. The only thing that matters is that the bomb's set, we're here, and the all the bad guys are on the Hephaestus. Now, we have a very limited window to hack their flight computer, get Hera on the local hardware, and blast off, so can we *please* get going?

HERA
Wait a second - where's Eiffel?

JACOBI
Yeah, change of plan. Eiffel's the Diversion Department now, he's sacrificing himself so the three of us can get away. Super sad, total tragedy, what a hero, **let's go**!

LOVELACE
What?!

JACOBI
Let's go! It means, "We need to get out of here, before -"

HERA
No! The thing with Eiffel!

JACOBI
Ughhh... okay, look: you hear all those alarms? That is Pryce, Cutter, and Associates being onto him. Which, honestly? **Way better** opening than we could have hoped for. So we'll make sure he gets a really nice commemorative plaque, *after we get out of* -

LOVELACE
Jacobi, *stop it*. What the hell is happening out there?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HALLWAY - MEANWHILE

Eiffel tries to catch up with Minkowski as she moves through the station. He OPENS one door -

EIFFEL
Minkowski!

Just as she's moving through another one. He propels himself as quick as he can, OPENS that door -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Minkowski, wait!

And is still well behind her. After another moment -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Goddammit... Pryce!

MINKOWSKI
You'll need to move faster than that, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Where are you taking her?!

MINKOWSKI
Oh, you'll see.

EIFFEL
What the hell is this -

But at that moment, Eiffel realizes where they've arrived.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wait, what are you -
(gets it)
Oh. No. No, no...

MINKOWSKI
I think you've finally caught on. Now then...

Minkowski holds out her arms, showing off:

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Number Four Airlock. In just a moment, I'm going to make the Lieutenant step into the pressurization chamber.

EIFFEL
No.

MINKOWSKI
And a moment later, I'll have her step **out** of the pressurization chamber. Without a space suit. That is, unless you report to the bridge and surrender yourself immediately.

EIFFEL
No!

MINKOWSKI
After that, you can tell me what Mr. Jacobi - who I can't help but notice I'm not able to reach, either - is trying to do.

EIFFEL
You go to hell!

MINKOWSKI
(shrug)
Not before Lieutenant Minkowski does. Outer door...

She turns towards the door, PULLS IT OPEN with a HISS.

EIFFEL
Commander, please!

He's rushed forward, and GRABS onto her arm. But, SMACK! Minkowski DECKS HIM, knocking him clear across the room. He collides against the wall -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(pained)
Ahhgh! Stop!

MINKOWSKI
Goodbye, Officer Eiffel.

With that, she SHUTS THE OUTER DOOR. She FLICKS A SWITCH, and we hear the airlock machinery HUM TO LIFE.

EIFFEL
No, no, c'mon!

MINKOWKSI
(through the door)
De-pressurization in about... two minutes. Any second thoughts?

EIFFEL
(slamming his fist against the airlock)
Commander! You can fight this! You have to - !

He's interrupted by the sound of a GUN COCKING behind him.

RACHEL
Evening, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(so sarcastic)
Miss Young. Glad you could join us.

He slowly turns around - and suddenly MORE GUNS ARE COCKED.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh, and you brought the entire Hermes Goon Squad. *Great*.

Indeed, Rachel has brought all four of the Hermes crew, who've silently spread out around him.

RACHEL
Points for trying, Eiffel. Except? No. No, there are no points for trying. Put your hands where I can see them.

Eiffel ignores the posse, and turns to the inner airlock door. He BANGS on it twice.

EIFFEL
Commander. Commander, listen to me. I need you come back. I need you to SNAP. OUT. OF IT.

MINKOWSKI
Removing the safety features...

We hear some muffled BEEPING.

EIFFEL
C'mon! C'mon please, Minkowski!

RACHEL
You're either gonna come along quietly, or you are going to watch her die. It's your choice.

For a moment they stare at each other, the tension mounting, until finally -

There's a sound - a short BURST OF A RADIO SIGNAL.

Instantly, all four goons GO COMPLETELY LIMP. Their weapons drop from their hands. They float, suspended in the air.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What the... ?

She turns around to find -

JACOBI
Huh. Well that worked.

LOVELACE
I guess Hera had the right frequency for the Hermes Crew after all.

Lovelace is holding a radio transmitter in one hand.

RACHEL
What did - how did you - ?

LOVELACE
By the way, Miss Young, I **do** remember you. And I have feeling you're going to remember **this.**

And with that, Lovelace lifts up her other hand - in which she holds a WRENCH - and BRINGS IT DOWN on Rachel's head. CLAAANG! It instantly knocks her out.

EIFFEL
Captain?! Jacobi?

LOVELACE
Hey Eiffel. Cavalry's here.

JACOBI
The *unenthusiastic* cavalry...

LOVELACE
... but it's here.

EIFFEL
They're - the Hermes crew, are they... What did you do?

JACOBI
Shut them down. And... hopefully gave them some peace. Let's get Minkowski out of here.

There's a CRRRK! of static from Lovelace's walkie-talkie.

MINKOWSKI
(through walkie-talkie)
Sorry, Captain. The door's sealed. It won't open except from the inside.

LOVELACE
Pryce, listen to me, if you don't get her out of there right now, say goodbye to any hope you have of me cooperating with -

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Oh dear. I think there's been some kind of miscommunication. Your cooperation would have made things a lot smoother, but, at the end of the day, your *compliance* will do just as nicely. Now, if you'll excuse me, the Lieutenant has an airlock to open.

LOVELACE
(simultaneous)
Stop it!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(simultaneous)
No, please!

But despite their protests, we hear BUZZ! of the airlock engaging, a pneumatic HISS, and -

BEAT.

BEAT.

Suddenly - the sound of the AIRLOCK POWERING DOWN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the - did - did she just - ?

A moment later, the inner airlock door opens, revealing -

MINKOWSKI
(groggy, clutching her head)
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Eiffel? What - in the name of God - is going on?

EIFFEL
Commander! You're back!

LOVELACE
Run now, celebrate later. Come on, let's get the hell out of here.

Let's. As the three escape into the hallway, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Pryce, Cutter, Riemann, Rachel (with an icepack to her head) in the bridge. A door OPENS, and Kepler enters.

KEPLER
No sign of them, sirs. Best guess is they've escaped into the duct system.

PRYCE
What are you basing that guess on, Colonel Kepler?

KEPLER
They've done it before. They know the layout pretty well.

RACHEL
Have they hit you with a wrench before? Because -

MR. CUTTER
Thank you, Rachel. Damage report?

REIMANN
Well, we've lost control of the Hephaestus crew. We also lost our personnel from the Hermes, who are dead by now.

MR. CUTTER
Well, that we can't fix.
(wait..., to Pryce:)
... *right*?

Pryce waves her hand up and down and shrugs.

PRYCE
Eeeeh...

MR. CUTTER
That we can't fix *right now*.

RACHEL
There's also some damage to the airlock, to the station's imaging and thermal sensors...

MR. CUTTER
Impressive. What else do we know about their plans?

PRYCE
Let's find out... 214?
(BEAT, the speakers CRACKLE a little)
Come on... I'm asking nicely. What are they planning?

BEAT. Then -

HERA
(against her will)
They've planted an explosive device in engine control. Remote detonation. It's set to go off when it senses the Sol has launched away from the Hephaestus. *For God's sake...*

PRYCE
Thank you.

MR. CUTTER
We'll need someone to take care of that little nuisance. Mr. Riemann?

RIEMANN
On it, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Meanwhile, there's the issue of our missing friends. How's that look?

KEPLER
Well, sir, it's a... a tall order. We don't know what their intentions are. We don't know where they're going, and the Hephaestus is huge. It could take days, possibly even weeks to track them -

MR. CUTTER
Miranda?

PRYCE
Give me six hours. Alive or dead?

MR. CUTTER
Alive, if you can manage it.

PRYCE
Of course.

MR. CUTTER
Why don't you go with her, Warren? You might learn a thing or two.
(taking everyone in)
Come on everyone - no need to look so glum. We're about to accomplish something truly momentous. It's exciting!
(BEAT, he smiles)
This is only a setback, everyone. The fun's just getting started.

And off of that ominous note, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 57.

WOLF 359

"QUIET, PLEASE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1218 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 58:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - STORE ROOM B4 - 1800 HOURS

It's been about an hour since the end of our previous episode.

We hear the sound of SCUFFLING and RATTLING. Eiffel, Lovelace, Jacobi, and Minkowski are in the back of one of the station's storerooms. Minkowski is going through one of the crates. Lovelace is keeping watch.

After a moment -

JACOBI
This is taking too long.

MINKOWSKI
Hold on...

JACOBI
We've been in this storeroom too long, we should stay on the move.

MINKOWSKI
Just one more minute, I know it's here somewhere...

Eiffel approaches Lovelace. In a furtive whisper:

EIFFEL
You see any movement, Captain? Any signs of pursuit?

LOVELACE
Not yet...

He turns back to Minkowski and Jacobi.

EIFFEL
How are you doing, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Fine, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
You sure?

MINKOWSKI
A little shaky, but fine. I'm fine.

EIFFEL
Yeah, an evil mega-genius almost had you space yourself. If you need a moment to -

MINKOWSKI
No, Eiffel. We're going to save all of the traumatized breaking down until later. Right now? We keep it together, keep moving, and keep - AH-HA. Got it.

She emerges from the crate, holding a METALLIC BRIEFCASE. She starts to adjust the dials on the lock.

EIFFEL
Great! I'm so glad we got it. Also, what is it?

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, you remember that time when I went a *little* overboard while hunting the Plant Monster?

EIFFEL
A <u>little</u> overb- ?

MINKOWSKI
Well, part of going overboard is setting up a couple of equipment caches around the station.

She OPENS THE CASE. Eiffel and Jacobi peer in.

JACOBI
Wow. That's... *pretty* overboard.

EIFFEL
I *did* always wonder what happened to the tactical knives kit...

MINKOWSKI
That, plus independently networked ear pieces, microphones, eye-cameras, sound and motion meters... and the last two hand guns not in the small arms locker. Everything you'll ever need to go monster hunting, and more. Lovelace, catch.

She TOSSES Lovelace one of the two guns. Lovelace SNATCHES IT out of the air, COCKS IT, and HOLSTERS IT.

LOVELACE
Thanks.

Minkowski COCKS and HOLSTERS the other gun.

JACOBI
And now that we're packing safari gear, any ideas for a new plan?

LOVELACE
I think the new plan is the old plan. Get on the Sol. Fly away. Blow up the Hephaestus.

HERA
(tremendous effort)
Won't... work.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? Are you there?

HERA
Just... one... mom-

There's a CRACKLE from the speakers followed by a DIGITAL BLIP, the code equivalent of a door getting unstuck.

HERA (CONT'D)
(oh, sweet relief)
AHHH! There we go, finally.
(ahem)
Sorry about that. It took me a while to find you, and I only just figured out how to bypass that stupid vocal restraint program. But hi, I'm here, how are you doing?

EIFFEL
Oh, you know: barely alive, terrified, and doing our best to not think about the past two weeks.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you, Eiffel. Hera, you said the plans not gonna work - why not?

HERA
Command knows about Jacobi's bomb. Mr. Riemann is disarming it.

JACOBI
And how did they find out about that, *Hera*?

HERA
Oh, how do you think?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm. Minkowski, we can't talk about this in front of her.

HERA
Excuse me?

JACOBI
Clearly anything she knows is compromised intel.

HERA
That's not how this... Look: if Pryce gives me a direct command? Sure, not much I can do there. But right now they're all looking for you, not paying attention to -

JACOBI
Yeah, and how long is that gonna last? Not to be indelicate but I don't know how we can - AHHH! OW!

That exclamation was caused by Minkowski GRABBING HIS EAR.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
AHHH! That's my - my ear! Let go!

Minkowski SLOWLY, maintaining her VICE-LIKE GRIP, PULLS HIS EAR DOWN, bringing Jacobi's face down to her eye-level.

MINKOWSKI
(low, deadly)
Shut. The Hell. Up. That woman? For the last two weeks, she was the only person who even **tried** to resist what Pryce and Cutter were doing to us. So you are going to show her some **goddammed respect**, am I clear?

JACOBI
Yes, yes, yes, **fine! OW!**

Minkowski RELEASES HIM. He STAGGERS backwards.

MINKOWSKI
You've been nothing but poison since you got on my station, Jacobi. You want to be part of the team? Straighten up and fly right.

She turns away from him: *lecture over.*

EIFFEL
(low)
Jesus, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
I'm done, Eiffel. We're getting the hell out of here. *Today*.

JACOBI
(still pained)
And how does Georgina S. Patton propose we do that?

MINKOWSKI
While they're looking for us on the Hephaestus, we get on the Sol, get Hera transferred, and blast off.

EIFFEL
And row back to Spain like there's no mañana?

HERA
Umm... two slight complications, sir. The security system on the Sol is now active. And on high alert.

JACOBI
Uhh, it shouldn't be. While we were damaging your equipment, I also disconnected the Sol's visual and infrared sensors.

HERA
Yes, but *someone* forgot about the audio sensors. Anything above the ship's normal background noise levels will set off an alarm and shut down the premises. Also, your keycard access has been revoked. You can't get past the airlock in the hangar bay, and that's the only way *into* the Sol.

EIFFEL
Well, it's a good thing we've got a demolitions exp-

JACOBI
No, Eiffel. Anything powerful enough to bust through the airlock would damage the ship.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
So unless you feel like putting on a space suit and carving up a hole on the side of the ship, that's probably it for this plan.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Actually...

JACOBI
Oh, God...

HERA
That... *could* work. None of the Sol's exterior airlocks seem particularly reinforced.

LOVELACE
Minkowski, you got a space suit in that bug out bag?

MINKOWSKI
No.
(pulls them out)
I've got two.

LOVELACE
(wheels turning)
Okay, so... what? Two people put on suits, go out there, bust into the ship, turn off the security systems, and transfer Hera over?

MINKOWSKI
While wearing these earpieces and eye cams. The other two stay over here, walk us through anything we run into.

HERA
Umm, but don't forget the -

MINKOWSKI
Yes, thank you Hera. And we do it without setting off any of the sound sensors.

EIFFEL
So we have to be *completely* silent until the system's off, or the proverbial jig is up?

LOVELACE
What, you don't like it?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
Actually, it's not awful. As long as I don't have to be one of the two morons that go out there...

With a quick WHIP! we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - 1900 HOURS

EIFFEL
Why the hell am I one of the two morons that's out here?

TWUMP. THWUMP. THWUMP. We hear the steady beat of MAGNETIC BOOTS walking along the outside of the hull. Eiffel and Minkowski, each wearing a space suit.

MINKOWSKI
Because, Eiffel, if there's some breaking and entering to do, I want my mischief specialist with me.
(lower, more to herself)
And if the support team is found out, I want the people who can take care of themselves on it.

There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC as their SUIT COMMS ENGAGE.

LOVELACE
(over the comms)
Minkowski, you reading us?

(Back in a corner of the storage room, Lovelace and Jacobi lean over a small, portable console that's been jury-rigged with their various bits of equipment.)

MINKOWSKI
We're here, Captain. Line's secure?

JACOBI
(also over comms)
Took a little bit of doing, but we should be able to talk freely.

EIFFEL
How's the signal? Getting us okay?

HERA
Loud and clear Eiffel.

Slowly, a RUMBLING starts to fade in...

LOVELACE
Video's coming through nicely too. We even found a sneaky way to hook it up to Hera's short-term memory.

EIFFEL
Nice.

Gradually getting louder...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Wait a minute... Hera, this is the first time you're only getting visuals from one place, isn't it? How's it feel?

HERA
It's really weird I don't like it.

LOVELACE
Simmer down, you two. You're about to get to the Sol.

Finally we hear it clearly: the enormous RUMBLING OF THE ROTATING STRUCTURE that is the U.S.S. Sol. (NOTE: yes, yes, I know, there shouldn't be any sound in space, artistic radio license, okay?)

Eiffel takes the thing in. GULPS.

EIFFEL
Right. I, uh, kinda forgot this was a... spinning target.

JACOBI
Rotational axis. It's how they do the artificial gravity thing.

EIFFEL
Well, that's great. Is there like a catwalk somewhere?

MINKOWSKI
Yes, but we'd need to go all the way around to the docking port. We'd use up too much air.

EIFFEL
Okay, so...

BEAT. Minkowski looks at him. The light bulb goes off.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Nnnnnoooo-ho-ho-ho. I'm not *jumping* from one spacecraft to another!

MINKOWSKI
You just deactivate your mag boots, drift close enough to the Sol's hull, and turn them back on.

EIFFEL
Yeah, with my track record with these mag boots? Pass.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Hard pass. What's Plan B?

Minkowski SIGHS. Points at something in the distant.

MINKOWSKI
Okay, fine. Look, you see that antenna thing, on the Sol? It's coming this way.

EIFFEL
Uhhh... yeah, yeah, I see it.

MINKOWSKI
How long before it's in front of you?

EIFFEL
Umm, I don't know. Like... fifteen seconds?

MINKOWSKI
Okay.

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... and? What do I do?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, you don't do anything. I'm the one that does the shoving.

EIFFEL
Oh, okay.
(huh?)
Wait, what?

Minkowski reaches over and SHOVES EIFFEL FORWARD, forcefully. Hard enough that he detaches from the station.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
AAAHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

Eiffel's scream continues as he drifts, getting fainter and fainter, until... CLONK! We hear the faint sound of him COLLIDING against the antenna.

LOVELACE
Tell me he's on structure.

MINKOWSKI
He's fine.

Minkowski takes a BREATH, and PUSHES HERSELF OFF the Hephaestus, pressing a SWITCH as she does so. Her MAG BOOTS POWER DOWN.

... for a moment she just floats...

... and then, she reaches the hull of the Sol, using a hand to steady herself. She clicks the SWITCH AGAIN, and we hear her MAG BOOTS POWER UP. THWUMP! and THWUMP! as her feet attach to the hull.

If this were the Space-Walking Olympics, Minkowski would now receive perfect 10's from the judges. It was pretty goddamned awesome.

We are now in -

EXT. U.S.S. SOL - CONTINUOUS

Minkowski straightens herself up, TURNS THE COMMS BACK ON -

MINKOWSKI
Okay, I'm on the Sol. Lets go, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
(still catching his breath)
You know, I don't know if I love or hate this new you, but... owwww!

MINKOWSKI
Come on.

EIFFEL
Did you not hear my, "Owww?"

MINKOWSKI
Quit complaining, it was the fastest way to get to an open airlock.

EIFFEL
Yeah, and where exactly is that?

Minkowski KICKS A METAL PANEL at her feet.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Oh. Okay, fine, that's pretty good. So... I'm guessing what? Outer hatch, leads to a service corridor, then the actual airlock?

HERA
Top of the class.

EIFFEL
How we gonna get it open?

She RAISES A DEVICE. It looks futuristic for a moment, until she turns it on, producing an UNMISTAKABLE WHIRRRR...

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
A *screwdriver?* You're going to **unbolt** the outer hatch?

MINKOWSKI
That's the idea.

Minkowski arranges herself, then starts to remove one of the bolts on the HATCH. WHHHHIIIIRRRRRR...

EIFFEL
Uh, how long is this gonna take?

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. SOL - TWO HOURS LATER

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. It's an ALARM. It sounds, well, *alarming*.

EIFFEL
Commander...

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel.

WHHHHIRRRRRRRR... They're still outside the Sol. Minkowski has unbolted several dozen pieces from the exterior hatch, but the main thing itself is still very much in place.

As she starts working on another bolt - BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

EIFFEL
Commander...

MINKOWSKI
What makes you think I can't hear it? I know!

EIFFEL
That's the third warning. I'm not one hundred percent on how these oxygen meters work, but if they're anything like my old Corolla -

LOVELACE
Eiffel, talking uses air. **Stop doing it.**

WHHHHHHIIIRRRRRRRRRR and then - CLANK!

MINKOWSKI
Okay, there. Try it.

They quickly grab two corners of the hatch and PULL UPWARDS. The METAL GROANS, SHIFTS... but HOLDS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Dammit...

She immediately sets off to work again. WHHHHIRRRRRR...

Right on cue: BEEEEEP. BEEEEEP. BEEEEEP. More insistent.

EIFFEL
Commander, I... do we want to consider doubling back to the Hephaestus airlock? Because -

HERA
Uhh - I'm pretty sure you're past that point. By... a bit.

MINKOWKSI
We're almost there, just hold on...

BEEEEEEEEP. BEEEEEEEEP. Eiffel EXHALES, his stomach writhing with anxiety.

WHHHHHHHHHHHHHIIIRRRRRR and then... CLANK!

MINKOWSKI
Okay, try it. Quickly, quickly...
one, two, and -

They both LIFT - METAL GROANS...

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(straining)
Hold on. Just... keep...

The METAL GROOOOOAAAAAANS and.....KKKKRRRRRUUUUNG! The hatch gives!

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Yes! *Finally*.

EIFFEL
Way to go, Com -

LOVELACE
Celebrate when you're *not* almost
out of air. Airlock. **Now.**

EIFFEL
Right.

They hop into the opening, into -

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SERVICE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A mechanical space, featuring several doors and walkways. Eiffel looks around.

EIFFEL
Okay, airlock, airlock, who's got
the air - ?

MINKOWSKI
(re: a hatch)
Here, this one.

Minkowski PULLS OPEN the airlock's OUTER DOOR.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
In, in, *quickly.*

He goes. She goes. The DOOR SNAPS SHUT.

INT. U.S.S. SOL - AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Minkowski and Eiffel dive at the airlock controls. As they do: **BEEPBEEPBEEPBEEPBEEP.**

EIFFEL
Yes, Space Suit, we know, we know: we're almost out of air!

Minkowski PRESSES BUTTONS. The AIRLOCK POWERING UP.

MINKOWSKI
Outer door? Sealed?

EIFFEL
Sealed.

MINKOWSKI
Number two airlock environmentals?

EIFFEL
Yes, yes.

MINKOWSKI
Number two air- ?

EIFFEL
Would you just do the thing!?

MINKOWSKI
Okay, okay. Here we...

She PRESSES A BUTTON.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

And then, finally, with a HISS OF AIR, the airlock PRESSURIZES. The INNER DOOR OPENS.

Instantly, Eiffel and Minkowski take off their helmets. Feeling a wave of **massive relief**, they INHALE and -

LOVELACE
HEY! STOP THAT!

- instantly freeze. The look at each other: *what*?

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(emphatic, clear)
Remember... sound monitors.
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Until you turn off the security system, you need to be **quiet.** No speaking, no loud breathing, nothing above background levels, understood?

BEAT. Finally, Eiffel and Minkowski, exhale - but quietly, through their noses.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Good. Get moving, we'll walk you through this.

Okay, some orientation before we proceed.

Until further notice, Eiffel and Minkowski are in **QUIET MODE™.** They won't be speaking, they won't be making noise. We *will* however, hear their breathing, their physical interactions with the space, and some GROANING/EMOTING under their breath.

We will also hear Lovelace, Jacobi, and Hera through the comms, via the ear pieces Eiffel and Minkowski have on them. Conscious of the situation, however, all of them will speak in furtive whispers, even when exclaiming or emotional.

Periodically - about every forty seconds or so - we will hear a PULSE-like sound go through the space of the Sol.

We rejoin the action as Eiffel and Minkowski gingerly step out of the airlock, into -

INT. U.S.S. SOL - UTILITY NODE - CONTINUOUS

It's a dark space - all the lights are out, so the only illumination is whatever is spilling over from the machinery in the airlock.

As they move into the room, Eiffel points at his ear, making a QUESTIONING GROANING SOUND. General impression is: *yeah?*

HERA
No, it should be fine, Eiffel. Our voices are going directly to your ear pieces, so the effect on the Sol's environment is negligible.

JACOBI
Unlike *your* voice, so easy on the emphatic groaning, all right?

Eiffel GROANS. Tighter, lower: *you wanna give this a try?!*

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Quiet.

LOVELACE
Quiet.

We hear one of the PULSES that goes through the air periodically. Eiffel holds up his hands: *what was that?*

HERA
Environmental pulse scanner. It's normal, just means the security system is paying attention.

On the other side of the room, Minkowski SNAPS HER FINGERS: *look here*. She gestures towards something.

LOVELACE
What, the light switch?

HERA
No, bad idea. That'll show up on the systems for sure.

JACOBI
It looks like you're in a utility node or something. There should be flashlights. Check out those cabinets to your left.

Minkowski nods, and turns towards the cabinets. Grabs the handle, starts to slide it open -

- and IT MAKES A **LOUD** GROANING SOUND as it opens -

- instantly she freezes. She and Eiffel SHARPLY DRAW BREATH.

BEAT.

They both EXHALE, softly. Well, this is gonna be tricky.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Open it... *slowly*.

Minkowski takes another breath, steadies herself. Then, slowly - *delicately* - opens the cabinet.

For a moment, we hear the SOFTEST sound of RUMMAGING. Then a PAUSE.

Then another CABINET DOOR SLOWLY SLIDES OPEN... more tentative RUMAGING... and finally -

CLICK-CLICK! A flashlight is turned on.

Minkowski turns to Eiffel, gives him a nod. He shoots her two thumbs up.

She produces another flashlight, and HANDS IT TO HIM. CLICK-CLICK! as he turns his on.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Excellent. Okay, you're gonna want to head to one of control consoles.

HERA
Nearest one is a service node. You'll want to go through the door on your left Eiffel, and - no, your *other* left - **wait, no, watch out for - <u>lamp</u>**!

But too little, too late: Eiffel, turning in the dark, KNOCKS AGAINST a LAMP placed on a nearby table, which teeters on the edge, and starts to **fall!**

There's a FLURRY OF MOVEMENT. Eiffel SQUEAKS, alarmed. Through the comms, Jacobi and Lovelace both GASP quietly, tensing. And the lamp falls... until -

BEAT.

HERA (CONT'D)
(<u>wow</u>)
Very... good... catch... Commander.

And so it was. The lamp is now in the hands of Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski, who took a rather epic dive to catch the lamp. She looks up at Eiffel. He mouths, "Sorry!"

Minkowski places the lamp back on the table. They both EXHALE.

HERA (CONT'D)
As... I was saying. Door on your left. Please and thank you.

They - carefully - make their way through the node, finally getting to the DOOR, SLOWLY OPENING IT, and stepping into -

INT. U.S.S. SOL - PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A long passageway, littered by doors. We hear Eiffel and Minkowski's slow, gentle footsteps as they move through it.

They get to a door. Eiffel pauses, points at it, and makes a QUESTIONING SOUND: *yes*?

HERA
No, the next one. Keep going.

Eiffel and Minkowski take a DEEP BREATH - this is starting to wear on them - but keep moving.

A moment later, they're in front of the right door.

JACOBI
That should be the one, according to the plans. Head on in.

We hear Eiffel reach up and TURN THE HANDLE, PULL THE DOOR -

- and the door does not budge. Eiffel and Minkowski stare at it for a moment, then he tries again. Nothing.

Minkowski makes a noise, somewhere between a GROAN and a THROAT CLEARING: *ahem*?

HERA
Umm... plans don't say anything about that door locking so...

LOVELACE
It's probably just stuck. Just... put your back into it. But quietly.

Eiffel makes a quietly exasperated noise: *Good God...* But after a moment he rearranges himself to get a better angle for door-pulling.

He yanks it once. Nothing. He tries again, beginning to GROAN WITH EFFORT.

JACOBI
Quiet, please.

Eiffel stops what he's doing and holds up a rude gesture.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Yes, yes. Less flipping me the bird, more getting the door open.

Eiffel gets back at it, pulling... the door gives a bit... he pulls again... and...

Suddenly, unexpectedly, the DOOR GIVES COMPLETELY. It SLIDES ALL THE WAY OPEN, SLAMMING TO A HALT. It's **LOUD.** It **ECHOES.**

Eiffel and Minkowski FREEZE: *shit...*

HERA
Oh no...

The effect is immediate. (If score is playing it cuts out, immediately.) The environment changes.

The steady PULSE goes away, replaced by the ACTIVE THRUM OF A SCAN. A STEADY, URGENT BEEP rings through the air.

HERA (CONT'D)
Okay. Whatever you do, just... stay completely silent. And *still*.

THRRRRUM... THRRRRRUM...

LOVELACE
Hera? What the hell is happening?

HERA
The security system heard that. So it's active, it's trying to confirm there's an intruder before it... goes ballistic.

THRRRRRRUUUMMM... BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP... Eiffel and Minkowski are sweating...

LOVELACE
It can do that?

HERA
If Doctor Pryce had a hand in designing it? Sure. It's probably at least... partially intelligent.

Finally - after what feels like a SMALL ETERNITY - the security system goes back to sleep. The BEEPING and SCANNING NOISES go away.

Another moment... and we get the FAMILIAR, REGULAR PULSE.

HERA (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay, that's good. It's back to passive surveillance.

Lovelace, Jacobi, and Hera all SIGH in relief. Eiffel and Minkowski don't, however - they're too tense.

JACOBI
That was too close.

LOVELACE
Agreed, let's get this over and done with. Eiffel, Minkowski, you see that computer terminal up ahead? That should let you turn off the security system.

The pair clambers through the doorway and into -

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SERVICE NODE - CONTINUOUS

Carefully, Eiffel and Minkowski shuffle up to the terminal.

Once there, they TYPE SOME COMMANDS INTO THE COMPUTER. The SCREEN LIGHTS UP, and DIGITAL TEXT STREAMS INTO IT.

For a few seconds, the two of them TYPE and the SCREEN RESPONDS. It seems like progress, until -

BEAT.

Then, as one, Eiffel and Minkowski both take a DEEPLY FRUSTRATED BREATH.

LOVELACE
What? What's the problem?

Softly, just enough to guide their attention, Minkowski TAPS on the screen, leaning in to give them a better view.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What's it... "Security System Administrator identity confirmation required to proceed. Must get -
(ah, *shit*)
- biometric or retinal identification to advance."
Mother... Well, that's not good.

Eiffel, lips tightly pressed together, goes, "HMM," as if to say: *no shit, Sherlock...*

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Shh, quiet, Eiffel. I'm thinking.
(SIGHS)
Hera, any chance of bypassing that?

HERA
... maybe. But not remotely, and I don't think I could walk them through it.

LOVELACE
So what? Don't tell me I need to go get Riemann's blood or something.

JACOBI
Oi, shut up for a second.
Minkowski, go back to the screen.
"Biometric or retinal ID..."

He stops for a moment, thoughts turning in his head. Then he EXHALES, hating the idea he's just had.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
I think I know how to get past that.

LOVELACE
Oh?

Eiffel and Minkowski make their own, low curious noises.

JACOBI
Hera, is there a way for them to get to Pryce's lab without tripping any alarms or boobytraps?

HERA
... yeah? I think so? Why?

JACOBI
Well... one of my *favorite* discoveries while we were in puppet mode is that Pryce has to actually do maintenance on her cybernetic eyes. Which she does in her lab... where she keeps a couple of *spares*.

Eiffel makes a PROFOUNDLY DISPLEASED sound. Halfway between a GROAN AND A WHIMPER. Minkowski is silent, but not any more thrilled about where this is going.

LOVELACE
Oh, I see. So the two of them could go to her lab, see if they can find one of the spares.

HERA
That *should* pass a retinal.

LOVELACE
All right, it's a plan then. Get cracking, you two.

But instead of "getting cracking" Eiffel and Minkowski just stand in place, still contemplating the insanity and gruesomeness of the task in front of them.

After a BEAT -

LOVELACE (CONT’D)
What? Why aren't you two...
(BEAT)
Oh, I'm sorry, do you have a better plan?

Both Eiffel and Minkowski GROAN in protest.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
All right, fine, lets be democratic. Everyone in favor of going to the lab, say, "Aye."

LOVELACE, JACOBI, AND HERA
Aye.

LOVELACE
Now everyone opposed, say, "Nay."

Through their tightly clenched teeth and firmly closed lips, Eiffel and Minkowski still manage to make sounds that *sort of* sound like, "Nay."

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Sorry guys, motion carries. The "ayes" have it.

Eiffel and Minkowski both GRUMBLE IN PROTEST.

JACOBI
I think you mean the *eyes* have it?

Eiffel and Minkowski both GRUMBLE IN PROTEST, *LOUDER*.

... so loudly, in fact, that the SECURITY SYSTEM ARMS AGAIN. We hear BEEPING and the more active THRUM of a scan. Eiffel and Minkowski stop breathing.

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

And then, it again subsides, returning to the regular PULSES of the passive system. As everyone resumes breathing -

LOVELACE
All right, enough. Get to the lab, find an eye, and - for the love of God - *keep it the hell down.*

As Eiffel and Minkowski exchange worried looks, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - PRYCE'S LABORATROY - 30 MINUTES LATER

The DOORS into the lab OPEN WITH A HISS. As they do, two flashlights peer into the space, searching.

Carefully, gradually, Eiffel and Minkowski step in.

HERA
All right, that's it, that's the lab.

JACOBI
Welcome to the creepiest place in the star system.

LOVELACE
Jacobi, where are these things? Where does she keep the spares?

JACOBI
Work station in the back. Keep moving, I'll let you know when I see it.

Under their breaths, Eiffel and Minkowski each have their own version of a GROAN OF MUFFLED ANXIETY. It's clear the prospect of moving into this lab doesn't much appeal to either of them.

But, after a moment, we hear their footsteps resume - first Minkowski, then Eiffel.

For a LONG, LONG, LONG BEAT we just hear them move in silence, using their flashlights to look around the lab.

We hear steps - hers measured, sure-footed, his skittish, jumpy.

We hear their breaths as they move through the space... forced and slow, palpably tense. They're punctuated by small, suppressed GASPS here and there.

And we hear THE LAB itself, which is full of sounds. *Terrible* sounds. Mechanical apparatus TURN, and BUZZ, and SPARK at irregular intervals. But there's other noises, distinctly non-mechanical ones. Things BUBBLE, and OOZE, and SQUIRM, and SWISH and other terrible things.

Dr. Frankenstein would be at home in this space. Sid, the neighbor kid from Toy Story, would also find it terribly welcoming. And while Eiffel and Minkowski get to experience it, inch by excruciating inch, we only get it through flashes of sound, neither commented on nor explained.

We only get to *imagine* whatever they're looking at.

Until finally - after what feels like a lifetime -

JACOBI (CONT’D)
There.

Eiffel and Minkowski JUMP a tiny bit at the sudden sound.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
It's that station in the back.

Eiffel and Minkowski SHUFFLE up to it.

LOVELACE
Try that drawer, Minkowski.

Minkowski SLIDES A DRAWER OPEN. Peers into it.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hmm... looks like that's just tools. Try the other one.

Eiffel SLIDES OPEN the next drawer. And almost faints. The familiar, CAMERA-LENS-like nose of SYNTHETIC EYES FOCUSING immediately greets him.

HERA
That's.... that's a lot of eyes.

So it is. About a dozen synthetic eyes are staring up at Eiffel and Minkowski, each alarmingly autonomous and active, even removed from its owner's head.

Now, Eiffel and Minkowski have both seen their fair share of that the kids call, "Some Fucked Up Shit," during their time on this station, but even for the two of them this is *almost* too much. They both blanche. Eiffel GRIPS THE DRAWER ever more tightly. It's all he can do to contain the tiny, scared, "MEEP" noise that escapes his mouth.

JACOBI
That's really, really gross. Why are they still... moving? They're not attached to anything, why are -

LOVELACE
Not the time. Eiffel, Minkowski, grab one, come on.

BEAT. Eiffel and Minkowski stare at each other. In the drawer the eyes look up at them, occasionally making tiny, focusing noises.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
... is there a problem? Let's go!

BEAT. Eiffel and Minkowski continue staring at each other.

LOVEALCE
Oh for God's... Yes, I know it's gross, but would one of you just man up and **pick up an eye already?!**

Eiffel and Minkowski both point at the other person, gesturing at the drawer with their heads.

LOVELACE
Are you kidding me?!

HERA
Officer Eiffel, Commander - rock, paper, scissors, whoever loses picks up the eye, okay?

They don't need to be told twice. They fly into it: ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, GO! At the same time:

- Eiffel holds up ROCK.

- Minkowski holds up PAPER.

Eiffel lets out a LOW, NEARLY APOPLECTIC EXHALE. His eyebrows twitch.

LOVELACE
(single breath)
Oh, sorry Eiffel, what bad luck, what a shame, now pick up the friggin eye!
(off his gestures at the camera)
No - no two out three! Just do it already!

Minkowski, thrilled to be on flashlight duty, steps out of the way as Eiffel positions himself in front of the drawer.

He takes a DEEP BREATH... steadies himself... HOLDS UP HIS HAND... ANOTHER DEEP BREATH... STEADY... STEADY...

The eyes look up at him, unblinking. Kinda curious.

... STEADY... ANOTHER BREATH... he bites his lip... CLOSES HIS EYES... DEEP BREATH... STEADY... STEADY... STE-

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(hissed)
Just pick up the stupid thing already!

He picks up the eye.

Those words do not do justice to the sonic experience of that moment. It is both mechanical *and* organic. It WHIRRS. It HUMS. It SQUISHES. It is a horrible moment for Eiffel.

Actually, it's a horrible moment for everyone. Including the audience. Especially the audience.

JACOBI
... there. See? That wasn't so bad, was it?

Eiffel makes an APPALLED SOUND, barely contained: ***who the hell are <u>you</u> to tell me how bad this is?!***

LOVELACE
Yes, yes, yes, you're a true American hero. Minkowski, get him back to the service node. **Quickly**, please, before he passes out.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - SERVICE NODE - CONTINUOUS

A DOOR SLIDES OPEN as Eiffel and Minkowski enter the space.

LOVELACE
Okay, you're back in the service node, almost there. You're doing great, Eiffel.

By way of response, Eiffel kind of WHIMPERS INWARDLY.

HERA
Commander, could you please pull up the security system?

Minkowski goes to the computer, TYPES. THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP.

JACOBI
Okay, that ought to do it. All right, Eiffel, just go up to the terminal and hold up the eye to -

Eiffel YELPS, alarmed, and FLINCHES, instantly biting his lips to keep himself from making more noise. A split second later we hear a SMALL, WET IMPACT.

It takes a BEAT for everyone involved to realize what just happened.

LOVELACE
(150% done with this operation)
Eiffel... tell me... that you... did **not**... just drop the eye.

Minkowski looks at Eiffel, eyes wide open, nostrils flaring.

JACOBI
Ummm, I don't think he can do that, Captain. For a couple of reasons.

LOVELACE
Would one of you *please* get that thing back? Where did it even go?

As Eiffel and Minkowski get down on all four, shinning their flashlights to and fro...

HERA
I, uh, I think it... rolled under the console.

Eiffel and Minkowski both GRO-

LOVELACE
Shut up! Enough with the groaning. *Focus*.

They both place themselves around the foot of the console, trying to get a good angle. Some slight EXERTION NOISES as Eiffel tries to make his arm reach far enough.

HERA
Come on... just a bit farther...

Stretch...

Streeeeeetch...

Eiffel CLENCHES HIS TEETH furiously... **sooo close...**

STREEEEEEEEEETCH... his fingertips are reaching soooo far...

And then...

SQUISH!

JACOBI
There you go! You got it.

RIEMANN
(mock concern)
Oh, thank God, I was worried for a moment.

Everyone freezes. It actually takes a moment for us to register that Riemann's voice came through the COMMS -

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
Also?

- which means that he's actually standing right behind Lovelace and Jacobi! As they turn around -

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
Hi.

The Hephaestus side of the comms ERUPTS INTO ACTION as Eiffel and Minkowski scramble. We hear a flurry of action, there's a PUNCH and a GROAN and a GUN IS COCKED and -

- and then the COMMS LINE CUTS OFF! Minkowski's hand flies towards the comms receiver.

MINKOWSKI
Captain?! Captain, are you - ?

EIFFEL
Wait, Commander don't - !

The security system THRUMS LOUDLY, zeroing in on them. Eiffel and Minkowski look around them, grimacing. *Shit?*

And indeed - a moment later everything around them BREAKS INTO LOUD ALARMS! LIGHTS COME ON AROUND THEM!

MINKOWSKI
Damn it all to hell! Captain? Hera?
(no answer)
Crap, we're on our own. Eiffel, lets get out of - No, no!

The last bit there is in response to HEAVY BLAST DOORS DESCENDING OVER EVERY PASSAGEWAY OUT OF THE ROOM.

EIFFEL
Oh for God's - are we *trapped* here?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, there goes the stealth portion of the mission.
(COCKS HER GUN)
Eiffel, get ready for combat.

EIFFEL
With what, *harsh language?*

MINKOWSKI
With whatever you can find that might make a good -
(off him pointing at it)
- no, not the stupid eye! Look for something better.

EIFFEL
(looking around)
Uh, uh, uh, uh - oooh, here we go! Here's a nice, blunt object.
(picks up a heavy thing)
Hardcover edition of, "Pryce and Carter's Deep Space -" **Goddammit!**

MINKOWSKI
It'll do. Brace yourself.

EIFFEL
Or not! We need to get out of here.

MINKOWSKI
And how do you propose we get through those **blast doors**?

Eiffel SIGHS, thinking. Then he walks up to the nearest blast doors. KNOCKS on it once.

EIFFEL
Hera? Can you hear me?

MINKOWSKI
Of course she can't! We lost the comms, and that was -

EIFFEL
Hang on a second, Commander.
(to Hera)
I know what you're thinking: "I can't do this. I can barely even hear them, there's no way I can override the blast doors." But yes, you can. You *are* that good. There's **nothing** you can't do.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
Hang on, give her a moment...

And then... CLICK! Unbelievably - MIRACULOUSLY - the DOOR STARTS TO OPEN.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
See? What'd I tell you, Hera?
You're un-friggin'-stoppab-

And that's when the DOOR FINISHES opening, revealing -

A GUN IS COCKED. Eiffel stops, dead in his tracks.

KEPLER
Evening.

Eiffel stares at the gun, his expression falling as he realizes what *actually* just happened.

EIFFEL
Oh. How you doing, Colonel?

KEPLER
Come quietly, Eiffel. Their patience isn't gonna last forever.

Eiffel looks at Kepler, steely, determined, finger on the trigger...

And then he hears a CLICK behind him.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... get out of the way.

And Eiffel nods, throws himself on the ground, revealing -

Minkowski. Gun pointed at Kepler. Ferocious.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Out of the way, Kepler.

KEPLER
You really going to do it? You got another one in you?

MINKOWSKI
I don't know, but I'm having *quite* the day, so we may find out!

KEPLER
No, I don't think so.

MINKOWSKI
Why not?

And, is if they'd been waiting for that CUE, all the LIGHTS GO OUT! Eiffel and Minkowski look around them, alarmed.

KEPLER
Because last I checked, you can't shoot in the dark.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, well, neither can you!

PRYCE
Maybe -

ANOTHER DOOR SLIDES OPEN. We hear SYNTHETIC EYES FOCUSING.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
- but not all of us are so *limited*.

If this were HBO, this is where Eiffel and Minkowski would both swear profusely. As it is, they just TENSE, coming closer together.

MINKOWSKI
Oh you gotta be...

PRYCE
Some of us can see *perfectly* well in the dark.

Through the dark, they can hear Pryce approaching. STEP... STEP... STEP...

EIFFEL
(tight whisper)
Commander? Orders? I've still got the flashlight, I could -

PRYCE
Colonel Kepler, if they turn on any source of light, shoot them dead where they stand.

KEPLER
Understood.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, so what? It's either get shot by *him* or let *you* kill us?

PRYCE
Oh, don't be silly. I don't kill people, Lieutenant. It's so wasteful.

A DEVICE WHIRRS in her hands. It's the same machine she used to install the restraining bolt in Episode 55.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
You work for me now, and I value all my workers very highly. I don't know how you managed to break out of your restraining bolts, but I am very much looking forward to solving that puzzle.

Eiffel and Minkowski take another step backwards - and find themselves against a wall! No way out!

Minkowski EXHALES, more growl than breath...

Pryce takes another STEP forward... and another one...

Minkowski's grip on her gun tightens...

PRYCE (CONT'D)
There, there, Lieutenant... You're going to come quietly now.

And then - Eiffel LAUGHS. Softly, quietly, huskily, but there it is. Pryce's gaze flickers to him.

EIFFEL
No... we're not. You know why? Because as someone once told me: "Pryce and Carter 754: In an emergency, take stock of the tools at your disposal, then take stock again. Repurpose, reuse, recycle." And right now? You know what I got?

He produces something from his pocket.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I got this lighter from when Cutter was using me as his personal cabana boy. And -

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... what are you...?

EIFFEL
- **and** I've got myself this big, *fat* copy of the Deep Space Survival Manual, and you know what I'm gonna do with it?

Kepler realizes what is about to happen -

KEPLER
Wait, Eiffel, don't - !

Eiffel STRIKES THE LIGHTER. And LIGHTS THE BOOK ON FIRE, revealing Pryce just a few feet away from him!

EIFFEL
I am going to repurpose it... and reuse it... and recycle it into a GIANT FIREBALL OF DEATH!

And he swings the flaming book forward, HITTING PRYCE ON THE SIDE OF THE HEAD.

PRYCE
UHHH!

Pryce falls, clutching the side of her head. We may or may not hear the sound of an electrical system POWERING DOWN.

EIFFEL
That's right! Doug Eiffel's Deep Space Survival Guide, B-

KEPLER
Put it out!

EIFFEL
Yeah, we'll be with you in just a -

KEPLER
PUT IT OUT! **NOW!**

But too late. An ALARM RINGS THROUGH THE ROOM. A second later, the BLAST DOORS DESCEND AGAIN, SEALING THE ROOM.

EIFFEL
Uhh...

KEPLER
Oh, you idiot...

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, what is happening?

KEPLER
The Sol. It has different systems than the Hephaestus or the Urania.
(heavy breath)
Including a very strict fire code.

MINKOWSKI
Strict? *How* strict?

A KLAXON BLARES THREE TIMES, like a submarine about to dive.

KEPLER
I'd hold onto something.

And with one final BLARE OF THE KLAXON - the ROOM suddenly STARTS SHAKING VIOLENTLY. Eiffel, Minkowski, and Kepler all GROAN, reacting to the unexpected change in G-Forces.

As the room around them continues RUMBLING and SHAKING, and ALARMS BLARE LOUDER AND LOUDER -

MINKOWSKI
K-Kepler! What the hell is happening?

KEPLER
Can't you tell, Minkowski? This node's been detached from the Sol! We're off structure! We just got ejected into space!

And as Eiffel and Minkowski eyes widen in horror, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END EPISODE 58.

WOLF 359

"CRASH AND BURN"

by

Zach Valenti

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1218 of the Hephaestus Mission.

START EPISODE 59.

BEGIN RECORDING:

INT. SERVICE NODE - 0200 HOURS

Pretty much immediately after we left off at the end of the previous

VIOLENT TURBULENCE, KLAXONS, fill the air.

Meanwhile, Eiffel, Minkowski, Kepler, and Pryce all struggle to steady themselves, trying to get a good footing.

EIFFEL
(freaking out)
What**... the hell...** do you mean, "EJECTED?!"

KEPLER
I think that word pretty much sums up the situation, Eiffel. This node's been ejected from the Sol. We're <u>adrift</u>.

PRYCE
Oh, how fun.

EIFFEL
What? How can you possibly - UGH!

That was caused by the room being VIOLENTLY ROCKED.

PRYCE
Come on kids, scream if you want to go faster!

She smiles, at no one in particular.

EIFFEL
No, but, w-w-w-why the hell would the ship - ?

KEPLER
Oh, I don't know, maybe some *moron* was about to set the service node on fire!

EIFFEL
But - but - but - just a **small** fire! And look, it's out now! Can we go back?

MINKOWSKI
That's... **not...** how it works! AGH!

That last is reacting to the room - really, at this point the **pod** - taking a SHARP TURN as more gravitational forces start to act upon it. Kepler and Eiffel also react to it, GROANING as they struggle against the turbulence.

KEPLER
Congratulations Eiffel... I think this time *you've finally killed us!*

EIFFEL
How is this my fault?!

MINKOWSKI
Hey! Enough!

KEPLER
(guttural growl)
You started the fire. You got us jettisoned.

EIFFEL
Well how was I supposed to know?!

KEPLER
It's a **fire**. On a **spaceship**. You shouldn't need any further explanation!

EIFFEL
HAH! Spoken like a man that doesn't know the first thing about commanding Douglas F. Eiffel!

COMPUTER VOICE
Now leaving, Hephaestus-Sol airspace.

Another SHARP TURN. Everyone GROANS.

EIFFEL
(on a roll)
And you know what? No! Your ship, your crappy fire code, your fault!

MINKOWSKI
Hey!

EIFFEL
Normally, I'm the regional champion, but right now? Between us?
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Guess what: you and Cyborga De Vil over there win the "Life Ruiner of the Year" competition!

KEPLER
Why you -

BANG!

Warning shot, straight between Eiffel and Kepler.

MINKOWSKI
I said **ENOUGH**. If I could have a moment of quiet please?

She can. Eiffel and Kepler both shut up. The ship continues to RATTLE LOUDLY over the KLAXON.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Fantastic. Now, in case you haven't noticed, this is an *emergency*. And I would *love* to start the process of getting us out of it, but I can't do **jack** while I'm still locked out of the control terminal.
(gesturing at Pryce)
So: Doctor? If you wouldn't don't mind?

PRYCE
Yes, Lieutenant. Very sensible. Kepler. Help me.

Kepler shuffles over to Pryce. As he approaches, she leans on him for support -

MINKOWSKI
No funny business, you two.

PRYCE
Oh, relax Lieutenant. I'm just a poor little old lady, need some help to make it across the rickety, bumpy space pod. But by all means, do keep pointing that useless gun at me, if it helps you relax.

Kepler helps Pryce towards the console. The POD SHAKES AGAIN, more VIOLENTLY. Everyone GROANS, holding onto whatever they're using for support.

KEPLER
(arriving at the console)
There we go.

Pryce puts her hands on the console, feeling it -

PRYCE
Where is the handprint reader?

KEPLER
Here.

He guides her hand to the reader. It THRUMS for a moment, scanning, then - DING!

COMPUTER VOICE
Identity Confirmed. System access granted.

PRYCE
There you go, have fun.

In an instant, Minkowski's at the commands, TYPING FURIOUSLY.

MINKOWSKI
All right, lets see.

PRYCE
(over her shoulder, mock hurt)
Nobody says, "thank you," anymore... kids these days.

MINKOWSKI
Shut up. Kepler, tell me this thing has *some* sort of propulsion.

KEPLER
Here, access this system...

Kepler HOLSTERS his own gun, joins into the TYPING, working next to Minkowski.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Stabilizer arrays 1 through 17...

MINKOWSKI
Engaging.

Minkowski SWITCHES and PRESSES levers and buttons on the dash.

BWAMP - whatever rudimentary ENGINE this pod has KICKS INTO LIFE.

Slowly, the SHAKING begins to EASE UP, the KLAXONS begin to FADE, and the ENGINE DULLS to a LOW HUM.

EIFFEL
Whatever you're doing, it sounds like it's working.

Finally, it seems like the the pod settles into a steady, even path. The RUMBLING SUBSIDES to a low, distant HUM.

MINKOWSKI
All right... Sit rep?

KEPLER
Yeah, one moment.

For a LONG BEAT everyone is silent. Minkowski and Kepler continue to pour over the computer. Eiffel stands right behind them, anxiously listening for the next thing that's about to happen. And behind him, Pryce stands, waiting.

A LONG BEAT CRAWLS BY, before finally -

EIFFEL
Sooo... hip-hip-hooray? We're all gonna be okay?

MINKOWSKI
Shut up.

KEPLER
Shut up.

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, sorry...

They continue typing for another moment.

KEPLER
I don't like that resistance rating.

MINKOWSKI
I know. We're going too fast.

From behind them, as if asking for the daily special:

PRYCE
What's the drag coefficient?

TYPING.

KEPLER
Oh dot seventy-nine.

PRYCE
(scrunching her nose)
Mmm. Stellar radiation pressure?

MINKOWKSI
Forty-two oh five meters per second squared.

PRYCE
Oh, that's kind of exciting. Fuel reserves?

KEPLER
Six percent of capacity.

PRYCE
In other words, enough to pivot, but not to set a course. We're going wherever gravity takes us.

MINKOWSKI
Not quite. We might be able to -

There's a CHIRP from the console as a new value pops up.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
... oh. Never mind. It's exactly what you said.

PRYCE
Top tip, Lieutenant: I cut to the chase. If it ever seems like I'm wrong, it's just that you don't have all the data.

But Minkowski's noticed something odd.

MINKOWSKI
Um.... Pryce?

PRYCE
That's *Doctor*, Lieutenant. Or *ma'am*, if you want to streamline.

MINKOWSKI
Pryce: you're as close to the console as I am. You're right next to me.

PRYCE
I know. As if I could forget, the smell alone...

MINKOWSKI
Then why are you asking us to read the values for you?

PRYCE
(plain and simple)
Because I'm blind, Lieutenant.

EIFFEL
You're **what**?

PRYCE
Blind, Eiffel. The word *is* in your limited vocabulary, isn't it? You live your entire life in a metaphorical state of it, so it should rind a -

MINKOWSKI
How are you blind?

Pryce points forwards, at... well, nothing really.

PRYCE
He did it. Actually I don't know where I'm pointing, so...

She points in a couple of different directions.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Wherever it is that Eiffel actually is. His little... what did you call it? It was quite colorful...
(snaps her fingers)
Ahh, yes. His, "Giant Fireball of Death." He got me on the head, knocked out my optics system.
(BEAT)
Don't get too concerned - I can reset the system as soon as we get back to the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
But until then, you're...?

PRYCE
As a bat, Lieutenant, yes. Why do you think I'm letting you drive?
(a small laugh)
Honestly, blinded by my own survival manual. That one's new. We'll need to put something about that into the next edition. Kepler, remind me?

KEPLER
Yes, ma'am.

MINKOWSKI
... great. Well, if we could please come back to our **dire situation**?

EIFFEL
Tell me we're not drifting into deep space?

MINKOWSKI
We are heading away from the Hephaestus. And picking up speed.

EIFFEL
I'll go get the cryo-freezer...

KEPLER
Relax, Eiffel. We're not headed towards deep space.

EIFFEL
W-we're not?

PRYCE
(bored)
No, we don't have the mass or the momentum to get to escape velocity. We're in a orbit into the star.

Eiffel BURSTS into RELIEVED LAUGHTER.

EIFFEL
Ohhh! Phew! Well, then, ... Well this should be easy!
(off their reactions)
Is it not gonna be easy? Why are you all still so serious?

PRYCE
If I could finish? It's almost certainly a *rapidly decaying* orbit. We're headed for the Red Line.

EIFFEL
And we can't just... turn around?

KEPLER
With what fuel, exactly?
(looking at the screen)
We burnt up most of our maneuverability stabilizing. We got one - *maybe two* - course corrections left.

MINKOWSKI
But nothing powerful enough to break orbit. We're stuck.

EIFFEL
So... we're about to crash and burn *into* Wolf 359? Emphasis on the burn?

MINKOWSKI
Unless we end up in an alien portal like you did last time.

EIFFEL
What part of "Blue: Waters Fine," "Red: Fiery Death Ball" wasn't clear?

Pryce CLEARS HER THROAT loudly.

PRYCE
As charming as this is... could we skip to the part where someone *picks up the comms* and *call Marcus?*

EIFFEL
Whooooa, hold on, hold on... you mean "Mr. C.E.Oh I'm Sorry, Were You Not Okay Dying In Space?!" You want us to call *him*? Hahahahaha what a funny yeah **no.**

KEPLER
Eiffel -

EIFFEL
Look, I'm *thrilled* that you guys are good friends with the Big Bad Wolf, but I'm still at, "Not By the Hairs of My Chinny-Chin-Chin." Come up with a better plan.

But Minkowski places a hand on his shoulder.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel...

There's a LONG BEAT.

Finally -

EIFFEL
Ugh.... *fine*. One second, let me open a channel.

Eiffel FIDDLES with the DIALS and TYPES OUT a command on the console aaaand.... STATIC.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh...

He tries again, making adjustments to the comms. But sure enough, as soon as he clicks them on properly: STATIC.

BEAT. Everyone stares at him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Umm...
(old-timey announcer voice)
The number you're trying to reach isn't accepting calls at this time. Please hang up and... and *hope* that your comms system wasn't broken by the turbulence?

Kepler and Minkowski GROAN. At the same time:

PRYCE
Oh good...

And off that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

CUTTER and RACHEL, gathered around the central command console. At the moment, all of them listening to the COMMS, which are just spewing forth STATIC.

HERA
The problem isn't the comms, they're *fine*. It's interference. Between the star's radiation and their angle of orbit, we won't be able to contact them until they're closer to the station again.

MR. CUTTER
And how long will that take, Hera? Now that we've reconnected your visual system, lets put it to good use.

HERA
Calculating.... At their last recorded speed, and assuming they were able to stabilize? It'll be two hours and eighteen minutes to complete an orbit, which means they'll be within range in approximately one hundred and thirteen minutes.

RACHEL
And how long will they stay in comms range?

HERA
... a few minutes? Maybe?

RACHEL
Oh great. Well, I if we miss them, there's always the next go-around.

MR. CUTTER
Yes, and no.

HERA
They're not staying in a stable orbit. They're going to complete... *hopefully* three more orbits.

MR. CUTTER
Rachel?

RACHEL
Yes, sir?

MR. CUTTER
When we get back to Earth, find out whoever designed these pods' flight system.

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

MR. CUTTER
And have them skinned. Slowly.

RACHEL
Very good, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Hera, what about intercepting them on the Hephaestus?

HERA
To do so would most likely take us out of orbit as well. There's a ninety percent chance of failure.

MR. CUTTER
Hmmm... Thank you, Hera. That will be all for now.

LONG BEAT as Cutter strokes his chin pensively. He's never seemed so subdued and collected.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Rachel, get me Victor and our two guests. We need to discuss our options.

There's a WHIP! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 5 MINUTES LATER

Lovelace and Jacobi, both hand-cuffed, are SHOVED into the bridge, landing with a GRUNT. Behind them, Riemann and Rachel watch. In front of them -

MR. CUTTER
Good evening, Isabel. Daniel. We're all going to work together to clean up this little mess.

Lovelace LAUGHS mirthlessly.

LOVELACE
Still hilarious.

MR. CUTTER
The only thing that's hilarious, Captain, is how little time we have before our people are all incinerated by the star.

Lovelace and Jacobi exchange a look.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
My associate is currently stuck on this wayward pod, and I'm afraid I won't be able to do much without her. So I'm going to need your assistance.

Lovelace holds up her hands. Her handcuffs CLANK as she strains against them.

LOVELACE
Not gonna be much help while wearing these.

MR. CUTTER
Victor.

RIEMANN
Yes, sir.

CUFFS CLINK as they're removed. Lovelace rubs her wrists.

JACOBI
(mock wince, sucking air through teeth)
Actually, I'd prefer to keep mine on. It's become part of my signature look -

RIEMANN
Oh, Heaven forfend we destroy your *look*. Here let me help you with that.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK - Riemann tightens the cuffs on his wrists.

JACOBI
OW-OW-OW-too tight, too ti - !
OKAY, OKAY, TAKE THEM OFF!

CLINK - Riemann takes of Jacobi's cuffs.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(rubbing his wrist)
Ah... okay, that one I *kind of* deserved.

MR. CUTTER
Better? Good. Now, pretty please, with sugar on top, can we get down to business?

Again, Lovelace and Jacobi exchange a look. It's unsettling to see Cutter so soberly serious.

LOVELACE
Okay, fine. What do you want me to do?

Cutter SCOFFS: *you're cute.*

MR. CUTTER
For the time being, Isabel? Be patient, and get ready. No...
(turning to Jacobi)
... what I **actually** need... is someone with lots and lots of experience launching ballistics into the air space around this station.

As Jacobi blinks, realizing where this is going, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SERVICE NODE - 110 MINUTES LATER

Eiffel, Minkowski, Kepler, and Pryce. Minkowski still tinkers with the controls, everyone else waits in their respective corners.

EIFFEL
Ninety-four bottles of beer on the wall, ninety-four bottles of beer -

MINKOWSKI
(my patience is running out with you)
Eiffel...

EIFFEL
(undeterred)
Take one down, pass it around, ninety-three bottles of -

MINKOWSKI
EIFFEL!

EIFFEL
No! The singing will continue until someone has an idea for how to get out of this. We all agreed!

KEPLER
Literally nobody agreed to that asinine -

EIFFEL
(top of his lungs)
NINETY-THREE BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL, NINETY-THREE BOTTLES OF - whoa!

That, "Whoa!" is motivated by an OBJECT COLLIDING against the wall next to his head and SHATTERING.

PRYCE
Did I hit him? Somebody please tell me that I hit him.

EIFFEL
Lady, what's your problem?

PRYCE
Oh lots of things. I'm stranded in space, I can't see, you're not contributing anything to my survival, I'm getting hungry...
(HALF-BEAT)
Hmm, maybe those last two can cancel each other out...

EIFFEL
Oh, ha-ha, very funny... right?
(off her cold smile)
... eeep?

Fortunately, at that moment, there's the familiar BUZZER of the Comms System!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
What the - ?

MINKOWSKI
Is that a hail?

PRYCE
(try to keep up)
Of course it is.

EIFFEL
I... I guess maybe it was just interference? And as soon as -

PRYCE
Oh, of course it was. You're only *now* working that out?

BUZZER. BUZZER.

EIFFEL
You knew we'd get through eventually? Why didn't you say anything?

PRYCE
Oh, I don't know, maybe because I don't like you? Now somebody pick up, already.

KEPLER
Yes, sir.

Kepler makes a move towards the Comms -

- but suddenly Minkowski is there, COCKING HER GUN.

MINKOWSKI
Wait a minute. Not so fast.

KEPLER
Oh, what now?

MINKOWSKI
Kepler: your gun. Give it to me.

BUZZER, BUZZER - the Comms continue ringing, impatiently.

KEPLER
Really not the time, Lieutenant. We may not have long before we lose the signal again.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, really? You don't say. *Gun, please*.

EIFFEL
Uh, Commander... ?

MINKOWSKI
(never taking her eyes off Kepler)
I know what I'm doing, Eiffel.
(to Kepler)
You think I'm stupid? We call for help, Cutter and his cronies pick us up, then what happens? How does that end well for me and Eiffel? Thanks, but no thanks, I'll take some insurance right here and right now.

KEPLER
This is not the - you might be killing us right now, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Actually, Colonel, I think you'll find that *you're* killing us. So, for the last time: **Gun. Now.**

BEAT. Kepler stares at her. Unmoving. Until -

PRYCE
Well look who's finally thinking like a grown-up. Kepler, give her your gun.

KEPLER
Ma'am, I have this under -

PRYCE
Stand down, Colonel. That's an order.

BEAT. Kepler GROWLS quietly as he hands over his gun.

MINKOWSKI
Good. Okay, Eiffel, patch us through.

EIFFEL
(holy crap)
Y-yes, sir.

He TYPES a command into the console and flicks a SWITCH. The comms WHINES to life.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hello? Hephaestus? You out there?

MR. CUTTER
(over comms)
Hello, Eiffel. Is Miranda there?

PRYCE
Hi Marcus. How's everyone? Do they miss me lots?

CUTTER
Everything's under control on this end. Listen: we're about to lose radio contact in just a moment. We'll have another window in about two hours, and then just one more after that.

PRYCE
Well, isn't that *fun*? Do tell me there's a plan, Marcus, or do I have to do *everything* around here?

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - FIFTY MINUTES LATER

Lovelace, Jacobi, Riemann, and Cutter, all gathered around some equipment. Jacobi is showing off a piece of equipment to them.

JACOBI
TRK-10 Torpedos. Compatible with our probe launcher. Magnetic grapple lock. Reinforced cable tether attaches *here*.

LOVELACE
(incredulity)
... *that's* the plan? Shoot them with torpedoes?

JACOBI
It's just one big grappling hook, Captain.

LOVELACE
That's supposed to make me feel better?

RIEMANN
Wait a moment. This equipment was originally meant for *construction* work. Right? You're sure it'll handle this maneuver?

JACOBI
Yeah, it'll be fine.

Cutter eyes the equipment and Jacobi. After a moment -

MR. CUTTER
Daniel... I imagine at some point during your time with Warren you gathered *some* sense of what happens when people fail me, correct?

JACOBI
Yes, sir.

BEAT. And then... Cutter turns away from Jacobi, satisfied.

MR. CUTTER
Good. That is all. Victor, suit up. I want you ready within the hour.

RIEMANN
Yes, sir.

JACOBI
Uh... wait, wait - what?

MR. CUTTER
Is there a problem, Daniel?

JACOBI
Uh, yeah. See, there's this little key element to the plan. It's called, "Having a shooter that knows what the hell he's doing." You might have heard of it?

RIEMANN
You think I can't make the shot?

JACOBI
Maybe. I don't know. What I do know is that you've never shot this kind of torpedo with this kind of launcher on this space station. No one has... except me.
(to Cutter)
And you can't afford to take a chance on this.

BEAT.

RIEMANN
Sir?

BEAT. Finally -

MR. CUTTER
Very well. Suit up, Daniel. You too, Isabel, he'll need a targeting spotter, and I believe you two have worked together in the past.

LOVELACE
Yeah. I know the launcher.

MR. CUTTER
Good. I expect you to make the shot, Mr. Jacobi.
(as he goes)
For your sake.

Gulp? Off of that ominous note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Jacobi and Lovelace SUIT UP.

LOVELACE
I hope you know what you're doing, Jacobi.

JACOBI
I always know what I'm doing.

HERA
Even when shooting torpedos from an unstable launcher onto a fast-moving target?

JACOBI
Especially when... *that*.

He's unusually quiet, as if his mind is occupied by something else. A BEAT as Lovelace studies him.

LOVELACE
Jacobi?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm.

HERA
Are you okay to do this?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm.

LOVELACE
You can actually make the shot?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm.

HERA
And are you going to be the prettiest pumpkin princess at the ball?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm.

They stare at him. BEAT.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
... one of those was not like the others, wasn't it?

LOVELACE
Jacobi... look at me. Look at me with my serious eyes and my serious voice, and tell me the truth. *Can you make this shot?*

Jacobi takes a DEEP BREATH.

JACOBI
It's not so much a question of, "can." It's more a matter of... "will."

LOVELACE
Excuse me? What the hell are you -

HERA
Wait, what? **No**, you can't even be thinking -

JACOBI
Hear me out.

Lovelace bites her tongue - she's not gonna like this.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
You were there with me, you heard Cutter. Without Pryce, they're not in business anymore, and that's a good thing as far as I'm concerned. Maybe good enough that it's worth -

LOVELACE
You can't just make that decision for them!

JACOBI
Well, how the hell else are we going to stop this? Because I don't think we're gonna get another shot like this one.

HERA
But... He'll kill you. If you miss the shot.

JACOBI
(shrug)
Maybe. But like you said... it's a tough shot, from an unstable launcher, to a fast-moving target. Who knows if *anyone* could make it.

LOVELACE
You're... you're really considering this, you're really thinking of letting Eiffel and Minkowski die.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Yeah. I'm really considering it.

LOVELACE
Jacobi, you can't -

But at that moment, the DOOR OPENS -

RIEMANN
Jacobi, the pod's about fifteen minutes away from completing another orbit. We need you two in range. Now.

An UNEASY BEAT. Err...

LOVELACE
Riemann, could we just have two more minutes to finish -

RIEMANN
No, it's time. Let's go.

Lovelace looks at Jacobi, who gestures towards the door.

JACOBI
Come on, Captain. Let's go.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SERVICE NODE - TEN MINUTES LATER

Eiffel, Minkowski, Kepler, and Pryce, still on the pod.

There's a BEEP from the console, and Minkowski HITS a KEY.

MINKOWSKI
About two minutes out from the end of cycle number two, everyone.

KEPLER
Right.

She approaches Eiffel, speaks to him in a lower voice.

MINKOWSKI
You holding up okay, Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Yeah, fine, Commander.
(BEAT)
I really hate this plan.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, I know.

EIFFEL
They're going to *shoot* us. With *torpedos*. I'm not missing some nuance here, am I? It's us, getting shot, by torpedos.

PRYCE
Oh, you're being so *dramatic*. TRK-10's *barely* count as torpedos. They're glorified construction tools. There's no payload.

EIFFEL
No, but there are *thrusters*. Which, if I understood the explanation correctly, are there to help the torpedo <u>breach the hull</u> of the pod. Yes?

PRYCE
Math checks out. It should be fine. As long as the line holds.

EIFFEL
You know, if you were going for reassuring there, you really missed the mark by -

BUZZER! Kepler CLICKS on the Comms.

KEPLER
Come in, Hephaestus.

JACOBI
(over the comms)
Hey pod, how you guys holding up?

MINKOWSKI
Peachy, Jacobi.

JACOBI
Well, just hold on for a second longer, we're gonna get you home.

PRYCE
Anything you need on our side?

JACOBI
Nope! Just sit tight, hold on to something, and wish me luck.

LOVELACE
(also over comms)
Not that he needs it, as she's emphatically assured us...

EIFFEL
Hey, Captain. You got roped into helping out?

LOVELACE
Just with the targeting system. Buck Rogers here will take all the shots.

JACOBI
Which speaking of, you're only in range long enough for me to take a couple shots, so we need to make them count. You guys got your seatbelts fastened?

PRYCE
Just fire already.

OVER THE COMMS: we hear Lovelace making some final adjustments to the launcher.

LOVELACE
Come left seven. Up nine and one... Locked.

JACOBI
Okay, ready and...

OVER THE COMMS: we hear the BANG of the first shot.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
All right, first shot is away!

OVER THE COMMS: there's a WHIRR of a metal wire unspooling.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Looking good... looking good... aaand...

BEAT... Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH... aaand...

JACOBI (CONT’D)
Crap. Shot one is a miss, pod. Going for two.

MINKOWSKI
Come on....

LOVELACE
All right, let's... Jacobi, come right one plus one, down seven minus one, and... Locked.

OVER THE COMMS: A second BANG through the radio

JACOBI
Okay, shot two is away!

OVER THE COMMS: the WHIRR of the metal cable sailing behind the torpedo.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
That looks good... looks *real* good... and...

BEAT.

A SCRAPING SOUND on the hull of the pod

EIFFEL
Holy - ! He got us!
(HALF-BEAT)
Did he get us??

JACOBI
Negative, Eiffel. TRK scratched the surface, but didn't take. Going for number three.

KEPLER
Steady, Jacobi.

JACOBI
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LOVELACE
Right 1, down 1 minus 1. ...
Locked!

BEAT - and -

JACOBI
Negative, Captain. Pod's too far.
No way we can make that.

Everyone in the pod EXHALES, not thrilled to hear that.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Sorry folks, but ballistics is more art than science sometimes. Don't worry, though, we'll get you on the next -

But his voice is consumed by STATIC as they go out of radio range.

LONG BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Alright. Start the clock. T-Minus a hundred and fifteen minutes.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - MEANWHILE

Jacobi and Lovelace reload the torpedo tubes.

LOVELACE
Jacobi?

JACOBI
What?

LOVELACE
Do you want to talk about what just happened?

JACOBI
Not particularly.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
I need to know.

JACOBI
Don't ask.

LOVELACE
Why not?

But at that moment - the RADIO CHIRPS -

MR. CUTTER
(over comms)
Daniel, Isabal?

JACOBI
Yeah, copy

MR. CUTTER
What was that? What just happened?

JACOBI
Nothing. This is a bit of a process. We won't miss on the next go around.

MR. CUTTER
You'd better not. Do we understand each other?

BEAT.

JACOBI
Yep. Understood.

RIEMANN
Complete your preparations, and be ready for their next fly by. You have a hundred and ten minutes. Hephaestus out.

RADIO CHIRP as the line goes dead.

BEAT.

Then Jacobi RESUMES LOADING the next torpedo in it's tube.

LOVELACE
Are you sure you -

JACOBI
Yeah, I'm sure. Help me get the tethers on.

Off that trust inspiring note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. SERVICE NODE - 110 MINUTES LATER

A tense silence has fallen over the pod's occupants as they await their final approach on the Hephaestus. There's a LONG BEAT punctuated by BEEPS from the equipment.

EIFFEL
Is it me or is it getting hotter?

PRYCE
Environmental controls are starting to fail. Some of the systems must be starting to short out as we approach the star.

Eiffel GULPS. Tries to calm himself with some DEEP BREATHS.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP from the console.

KEPLER
Ready, everyone - about a minute out. Eiffel, open a comms channel.

There's a BURST OF STATIC as the comms line opens.

MR. CUTTER
(over the comms)
Hello, hello! Everyone still alive?

PRYCE
Very funny, Marcus.

MR. CUTTER
Please standby for contact, and we'll see you shortly.

PRYCE
Just get it right this time, Marcus.

MR. CUTTER
Now connecting you to the on-site team...

There's another BURST OF STATIC -

LOVELACE
(over the comms)
Pod, how you holding up?

MINKOWSKI
Ready to go home, Captain. You and Jacobi gonna make that happen?

LOVELACE
(pointed)
Oh, I don't know - *are we*, Jacobi?

JACOBI
(over comms)
Come on, serious now. Targeting data.

OVER THE COMMS: Lovelace makes adjustments on the launcher.

LOVELACE
Alright... Jacobi: right one, up four minus one.

JACOBI
How's that?

LOVELACE
Locked!

OVER THE COMMS: BANG.

JACOBI
Okay, shot number three is away...

OVER THE COMMS: we hear the CABLE WHIZ over the open comms.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Looks good... come on....

BEAT. Then -

LOVELACE
Negative, near miss over the port side.

MR. CUTTER
Is there a problem, Mr. Jacobi?

JACOBI
Nope, all part of the process!
Ready for number four, Lovelace?

LOVELACE
Right seven plus one, down four minus one. Aaand ... locked!

OVER THE COMMS: BANG. And another torpedo is away.

JACOBI
Shot number four is... oh, hello.
(BEAT)
Come on... good... *good*...

OVER HE COMMS: the cable WHIZZES AWAY...

BEAT.

EIFFEL
... did it miss or -

SLAM. It's a HIT as the torpedo ROCKS the craft on impact!

Everyone GROANS as the CRAFT SWAYS violently. The pod CREAKS and SHAKES and RUMBLES -

And then another NOISE STARTS UP - AN AWFUL, HORRIBLE, SCREECHING NOISE of METAL BREAKING!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(voice shaking)
AAAHHH WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING?!

KEPLER
It's the cable, it's not gonna hold in the hull! Jacobi, you need to land another line *now*, before we move out of range!

BEAT. Everything SHAKES and RUMBLES about them.

LOVELACE
Jacobi....

BEAT. Finally -

JACOBI
Ah, goddammit.
(all business)
Targeting. Now.

LOVELACE
Come left one minus -

JACOBI
Got it, locked.

OVER THE COMMS: BANG.

LOVELACE
Woah!

We hear JACOBI's TENSE BREATHING.

There's a LONG BEAT - THE HORRIBLE METALLIC BREAKING CONTINUES, RISING, RISING, and -

SLAM!

JACOBI
Gotcha.

The pod VIBRATES, SHAKING BADLY, RATTLING and - and finally settling into a steady, stable HUM.

For a BEAT everyone is silent. Then -

LOVELACE
Pod? You guys okay in there?

KEPLER
R-roger, Hephaestus. All systems are... more or less in the green. Looks like we're okay.

Lovelaces SIGHS in relief.

LOVELACE
Great, we're gonna start reeling you in.
(BEAT)
Good job, Jacobi. Thank you.

JACOBI
Yeah, don't mention it.

OVER THE COMMS: CLAP, CLAP, CLAP.

MR. CUTTER
Well done, Daniel. Knew you'd come through in the end. Miranda, I'll see you soon.

PRYCE
Yes, Marcus. We have some business to catch up on.

The RADIO CHIRPS as the comms close.

MINKOWSKI
I wouldn't be so sure, Doctor Pryce.

She COCKS HER GUN.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I think before *anyone* gets back to business there's a couple of things we need to discuss.

And off that cheery note we -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"TERMS AND CONDITIONS"

by

Sarah Shachat

Writer's Note: This episode takes place on Day 1219 of the Hephaestus Mission.

BEGIN EPISODE 60.

START RECORDING.

FADE IN:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - 0800 HOURS

Cutter and Rachel stand together. She monitors the progress of the rescue operation at a computer terminal, he looms by a window, staring through the glass.

We hear the steady BEEPS of a SONAR tracker.

RACHEL
Sixty yards, sir.

MR. CUTTER
And we're on target?

RACHEL
Mr. Riemann seems to think so. We should have a hard seal with the pod in another four minutes.

MR. CUTTER
Good.

For a BEAT they're silent. She is slightly unnerved.

RACHEL
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
Yes, Rachel?

RACHEL
Are you... all right?

MR. CUTTER
Naturally.

RACHEL
Good.

MR. CUTTER
Any reason I shouldn't be?

RACHEL
No, it's just... you're very quiet. *You*. Is something on your mind?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
(re: window)
That's a hell of a sunset, isn't it?

RACHEL
(where is this going?)
Yes, sir. It's... very red.

BEAT. Then -

MR. CUTTER
Do you like Westerns, Rachel?

RACHEL
(eyebrows rising)
Not... really, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I love them. I think I'd live in a Western, if I had the choice. They're... well, they're not really about the plot, first of all. You know what's gonna happen!
(counting off with his fingers)
Sheriff... outlaw... showdown at noon...

RACHEL
Does this have anything to do with -

MR. CUTTER
They're about how people are... *connected*. To a bigger picture. No matter who they are, or what... *quirks* they have, there's an order to how things work out.

RACHEL
And does that order end with me having to go through a small mountain of paperwork?

MR. CUTTER
You're missing the point. There's a... a *design* to these things. Those old movies always end the same way. And you wouldn't have it any other way.
(more to himself)
Hell of a sunset. Someone ought to use it in a movie.

An ALARM begins to BLARE. We hear the BUZZ of the comms.

RIEMANN
(over comms)
Sir? I think we have a problem here.

MR. CUTTER
Copy that, Victor. Secure the perimeter, we'll be right there.

RIEMANN
Roger that, sir.

BUZZ! The comms close.

MR. CUTTER
Ready, Rachel?

RACHEL
Yes, sir. Can't wait.

MR. CUTTER
Good. Show time.

And off of that reassuring sentiment, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - HANGAR BAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

A DOOR OPENS, and Cutter and Rachel enter.

Before them, they find Riemann. Behind him, MACHINERY HUMS and BEEPS as the pod finishes reintegrating into the Sol.

MR. CUTTER
Victor. What is the situation down here?

RIEMANN
We have hard seal, sir. Scans indicate we've completely reattached the service node to the Sol's structure. All the major systems within the node itself register as operational.

MR. CUTTER
But...

RIEMANN
... but... they're refusing to come out.

RACHEL
Excuse me?

RIEMANN
They've barred the door, sir. Say they're not going to come out until they speak to you directly, sir.

BEAT. Then Cutter EXHALES, frustrated.

MR. CUTTER
Fine. Lets get this over with.

RACHEL
(starting badly)
What? Sir, are we sure that's wi-

MR. CUTTER
(holding up a hand)
It's okay, Rachel.

As a very attentive Riemann and Rachel watch, Cutter slowly makes his way to the door that leads into the service node.

Once he's close enough -

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. There's a metallic echo as he BANGS on the door. We hear it fade into the ambient room tone.

Then, finally -

EIFFEL
(through the door)
Whoooo is it?

MR. CUTTER
Doug. How good to hear your voice again.

EIFFEL
How "meh" to hear yours.

MR. CUTTER
Would you care to join us out here? Surely you've spent more than enough time in that service node.

EIFFEL
Feh!

MR. CUTTER
We could have a cup of tea and -

EIFFEL
I repeat my last: *feh!*

MR. CUTTER
Is there perhaps someone else I could talk to, Doug? Doctor Pryce, perhaps?

MINKOWSKI
(also through the door)
She's unavailable at the moment, I'm afraid. But you can talk to *me*.

MR. CUTTER
Renée. Finally, someone with some common sense.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, see, that's funny. I'm not feeling particularly reasonable right now. I'm feeling like I might do something **rash.** Rash and **impulsive.**

MR. CUTTER
(fed up)
Enough. Lets cut to the chase. What do you want?

EIFFEL
(to Minkowski)
Oh, you hear that? He wants to cut to the chase! Well, I think we can make that happen.
(back to Cutter)
What's this about? Listen up, Mr. C: I think you need to take some time to really... *reflect* on the working conditions up here. Are you really fostering a supportive company culture? One that values the contributions of its employees? Because, do you feel like your contributions are being valued, Commander Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
I do not, Officer, Eiffel. I do not.

EIFFEL
Yeah, me neither. So if you want to see your much *worse* half ever again?

MINKOWSKI
We're going to sit down, we're going to talk terms and conditions, and we're going to do it our way? Understood?

MR. CUTTER
Renée, don't you think we're past -

MINKOWSKI
One hour from now, and you do it our way. Anything other than that? Anyone so much as *tries* to touch that door?

Even through the door, the sound of a GUN COCKING is unmistakable. Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - 0840 HOURS

Cutter, Rachel, and Riemann. The first two are watching a simulation Riemann's put together on a console.

RIEMANN
(narrating)
Once I have a hard seal from the exterior, I'll cut two fire-holes over here. The shock grenades are on enough of a delay that I can use the onboard cameras to guide them right under Hostile One and Hostile Two. Simultaneous detonation of the grenades inside and C4 on the door.

There's soft little video game POPs! for the hole-cutting and PINGS! that coincide with the simulated explosions under this explanation.

RACHEL
And then you go in and extract Doctor Pryce?

RIEMANN
That's the gist of it.

For a BEAT Cutter is silent, his eyes scanning the screen.

MR. CUTTER
Very good, Victor. Thank you. What would you say are the chances of success for this operation? Percentage-wise?

BEAT.

RIEMANN
Ninety-six, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Ninety-six?

RIEMANN.
Ninety-six. There's some tricky exterior work - always risk of malfunction there. And the plan relies on synchronized timing. But Minkowski and Eiffel don't have any tactical gear, or much experience with close-quarters assault.

MR. CUTTER
That we know of.

RIEMANN
(firm)
Sir, they won't know what hit them.

Cutter considers this for another BEAT, then -

MR. CUTTER
I suppose that what I'm asking is... whatever technical margins of error you're working with, can you guarantee the safe recovery of Doctor Pryce?

Riemann EXHALES.

RIEMANN
I can't one hundred percent guarantee it, sir. Not responsibly. But pretty damn near close.

MR. CUTTER
(running this over in his mind)
Yes. Ninety-six percent. You said.

This hangs in the air for a BEAT. Then -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Rachel?

RACHEL
Riemann knows his business, sir. Nine times out of ten, I think this works.

MR. CUTTER
No, not that. The other thing.

RACHEL
Sir?

Cutter keeps his eyes on the console over all the following:

MR. CUTTER
Do you remember the day I made you Head of Special Projects? What did I say? About why I was doing that?

BEAT. Then Rachel exhales.

RACHEL
You did it because I'm very similar to you, while still being... not you. Which means I will see the thing that you miss, and that I will say the things you don't want to.

MR. CUTTER
So?

BEAT. Rachel clearly knows what he's getting at, but she just as clearly doesn't want to say it. Finally -

RACHEL
(sooo delicate)
So... How... *possible* would it be to... to complete the mission at this point... *without* Doctor Pryce?

Riemann looks at her like she's nuts.

RIEMANN
Have you lost your -

MR. CUTTER
Let her finish, Victor.
(BEAT)
Rachel?

RACHEL
These... people are clearly a destabilizing element. And... despite our best efforts, they've already made us lose more resources than *any* of us would have thought possible. It may be time to... square this circle once and for all, as it were.

There's a BEAT as Rachel gauges Cutter's reaction. Seeing that he isn't erupting:

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I know - no, I don't know what your partnership with Doctor Pryce means, sir. I can't know the half of it. But...
(EXHALES)
Like I said: my job's to say the ugly thing. And right now the ugly thing is that we shouldn't risk everything we've worked for by giving them any opening.

MR. CUTTER
And now... you've said it.
(looks at her)
Thank you, Rachel.

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

Rachel and Riemann exchange a look, waiting for Cutter to decide.

MR. CUTTER
Can you un-mute the audio, Victor?

RIEMANN
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
The camera feed on the room where we're keeping Lovelace and Jacobi, can you un-mute the audio?

RACHEL
Sir, we don't have a lot of time before we have to decide if -

MR. CUTTER
Before *I* decide, I want *all* the relevant information. Audio, please.

Riemann TYPES a few things into a terminal's keyboard, and on the main monitor brings up a surveillance feed.

It shows Lovelace and Jacobi, locked in a completely storeroom. They look pretty wiped.

With a STATIC FLICKER we start to hear -

LOVELACE
(over comms)
They should *definitely* be back by now. Has something gone wrong?

JACOBI
(over comms)
I don't know. Honestly, I'm not sure why Riemann didn't shoot us the second we got back inside.

LOVELACE
Honestly not sure why he didn't shoot *you*. I wasn't the one who missed twice.

JACOBI
Hey, I got it in the end.

LOVELACE
(pointed)
Yeah.

JACOBI
Don't start, Captain.

LOVELACE
All I need to know is that it was a choice.
(BEAT)
Well... good choice.
(BEAT)
If it makes you feel better, I... I had the same thought. About how to play things out there. Not sure I would've made the same choice if I was in your position.

JACOBI
Eh. You would've, Captain.

LOVELACE
What makes you think that?

JACOBI
Because I played it the way I thought that you would.

He smiles at her, weakly. She shakes her head.

LOVELACE
Well... this time we're **really** screwed, aren't we?

JACOBI
Oh, royally.

MR. CUTTER
Thank you, that's enough.

Riemann TAPS a KEY and CUTS THE AUDIO.

RIEMANN
Sir?

RACHEL
Was... *any* of that helpful, sir?

MR. CUTTER
It was. Victor, please inform our friends that I am willing to negotiate with them.

RACHEL
What?

RIEMANN
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
Both of you settle down. You've had good thoughts, your perspectives have certainly helped. But...
(cracks his neck)
I think I'm going to handle this... *personally*.

RACHEL
And... how are you going to do that, sir?

MR. CUTTER
Same way I always do, Rachel, the same way I always do.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'm going to talk to Renée and to Doug, and I'm going to very patiently explain the situation, and they're going to do exactly what I want them to do, thinking it's what they want to do.
(then:)
Now, could one of you get me an earpiece with a remote transmitter and a mounted camera?

RACHEL
Umm, what for?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I just had a really *neat* idea.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - HANGAR BAY - 0930 HOURS

With a HISS, we hear a door OPEN, and a pair of feet step into the hangar bay. With a SLAM, the door SHUTS again.

There's a cheery BEEP and a door on the opposite end of the room SLIDES OPEN, and another pair of feet step in.

The first set belongs to Kepler, carrying an earpiece and a camera. He looks around, first at the table with two chairs placed in the center of the room, and then at his opposite.

KEPLER
Captain. Good to see you.

LOVELACE
Sure, whatever. Let's get this over with.

KEPLER
Let's... have a seat.

Kepler and Lovelace move to the center of the room and each take a seat.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Ready?

LOVELACE
Yeah. Earpieces on in three, two, one...

They both HIT A BUTTON on their earpieces, and we get TWIN BURSTS OF STATIC as they engage, each opening a comms line.

KEPLER
Okay. So from now on, Kepler, will be speaking on my behalf, repeating everything I say into his earpiece.

LOVELACE
(soo fed up with this already)
And... Isabel will be speaking for my interests. Am I talking to Renée or to Doug?

KEPLER
Minkowski. That you, Cutter?

LOVELACE
Naturally.

It's pretty awkward. Neither of them are happy about being roped into acting as Minkowski and Cutter's mouthpieces.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
So, shall we begin? We each have something the other wants. How do you propose we resolve this little impasse?

KEPLER
We... Well, obviously, we're not comfortable returning to the Hephaestus without certain... guarantees.

LOVELACE
Such as?
(off something from her earpiece)
Really?! Oh for God's -
(take two:)
Mmmhmmm? Such as?

KEPLER
The release of Captain Lovelace and Mr. Jacobi. And as further assurance, we also demand that... um, hang on a minute, Commander, do we really want to - no, shut up Eiffel. We agreed, just let me talk. Kepler! Stop it!

LOVELACE
Little technical trouble over there, Renée?

Kepler CLEARS HIS THROAT.

KEPLER
We demand additional assurances. Number one: you must promise our safety while you remain aboard the Hephaestus. Number two: you remove the collar program you're running on Hera. Give her full autonomy and use of *all* her processing power, completely uninhibited.

LOVELACE
Those are some *very big promises*. And in return? What will you do for me?

KEPLER
We will release Colonel Kepler and Doctor Pryce.

LOVELACE
Well, that's one thing. I'm giving you three. What else?

BEAT.

KEPLER
We... We know that Doctor Pryce is very important to you.

LOVELACE
More important than Isabel is to you?

KEPLER
She's important to your *plans*.

LOVELACE
True, but we've made a lot of progress already.

KEPLER
Oh, cut the crap. You wouldn't lift a finger to help anyone if you didn't need them for something, Cutter.

LOVELACE
Sure. Let's say - with all due respect to you, Warren - that Doctor Pryce's return is worth two of your demands. We're still not *quite* even, are we? What else can you offer?
(BEAT)
Well?

Kepler and Lovelace just look at each other for a moment. He SHRUGS.

KEPLER
All right, you want something else? How's this: we...
(frowns: *hmm?*)
... we won't annoy you?

LOVELACE
I'm not sure that's something you can promise, Renée.

KEPLER
First off, this is -
(into earpiece)
- no, I refuse to say that.
(BEAT, then he GROWLS in frustration)
This is your boy Dougie-Fresh at the mic, and if I know one thing about you, Cutter, it's that you're an evil son of a bitch. But if I know another thing, it's that you like things to run smoothly. And if I know a third thing it's that we have a habit of gumming up the works.
(Kepler SIGHS)
So here's the deal: leave us the hell alone and we'll leave you the hell alone.

BEAT.

Lovelace makes an ANNOYED NOISE, and then SIGHS.

LOVELACE
(to her earpiece)
Fine.

Lovelace SLOW CLAPS. CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Bravo, guys. Bravo. Way to bring it home at the end there, Doug. Very impressive. I reject your terms.

KEPLER
What?

LOVELACE
No deal. Not with those conditions. It wouldn't feel right - I'd be taking advantage of you guys.

BEAT.

KEPLER
What?

LOVELACE
Look, just between us? You're not thinking big enough. You should be asking for <u>way</u> more than that.

KEPLER
Is... that still Cutter talking, or...?

LOVELACE
Yes, it's still me. And I gotta tell you: Guys?

But mid-phrase, with a transitional WHIP! We -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Cutter at the mic.

MR. CUTTER
You're selling yourselves short here. You really are.

And with a transitional WHIP! We -

CUT TO:

INT. POD - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Minkowski at the mic. Eiffel looks on, very skeptical, behind him. Pryce sits in a corner, mildly amused.

EIFFEL
(low)
What is he doing...?

PRYCE
Here we go.

MINKOWSKI
(to Pryce)
Quiet, you.
(into mic)
What do you mean? What are you talking about?

To get the answer, with a WHIP!, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Back to Cutter.

MR. CUTTER
I'm just saying. If I was in your position... I'd ask for the Sol.

We start to INTERCUT between the spaces as necessary:

MINKOWSKI
What?

MR. CUTTER
Think about the landscape here. Even if I give you a guarantee of safety... then what? What are you gonna do with it? You need to think of a couple of moves past that. You gotta think about what you really want. And what you really want... is a way to go back to Earth. Am I wrong?

MINKOWSKI
(so cautious)
You're... you're not.

MR. CUTTER
Good. So, let's be efficient about it.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
If it were me, I'd ask - in exchange for the safe return of Colonel Kepler and Doctor Pryce, of course - for Number One: the chance to transfer Hera over to the Sol, Number Two: for the clearance codes to launch, and Number Three: for the most luxurious ship in the system to get the hell out of dodge!
(BEAT)
How does that sound to you, *Commander*?

Then with a WHIP! We -

CUT TO:

INT. POD - MAIN CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A STUNNED BEAT of Eiffel and Minkowski absorbing this.

MINKOWSKI
Is... Is this some kind of trick?

EIFFEL
Kepler: we're gonna put you on mute for a moment.

He PRESSES A BUTTON, muting the channel.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander, I don't care how badly he wants to get Lady iMac-Beth back - this is a trick. It's *too* good a deal.

MINKOWSKI
I know, Eiffel. But... he's right.

EIFFEL
He's the farthest thing from right. I know you won't fully appreciate the frame of reference for what I'm gonna say, but: **I have a bad feeling about this.**

MINKOWSKI
Me too. But I don't know how much longer we can play press our luck. If there's even a chance for all of us to get out of here in one piece...

EIFFEL
That right there. That hope is what he's counting on.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
Doug? Renée? You two crazy kids still there?

MINKOWSKI
(to Eiffel)
It's a snowball's chance in hell, I know. But it's a chance.

BEAT.

Then Eiffel SIGHS.

EIFFEL
Yeah, I know. Okay.

He PRESSES A BUTTON, unmuting the channel.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, we're here.

LOVELACE
(over comms)
So? Do we have a deal?

MINKOWSKI
(pained to say this)
Let's talk.

And with that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - HANGAR BAY - 1030 HOURS

There's a HISS as the door to the pod opens onto the hangar bay.

Then there's a BEEP as the door on the opposite end of the room SLIDES OPEN.

Again, Lovelace and Kepler are first in, this time with weapons pointed at their backs. Behind them step Riemann and Minkowski. They COCK their weapons.

Next, Jacobi and Pryce, each being watched by an armed Rachel and Eiffel. They also COCK their weapons.

Then, since the Last shall be First, in steps Mr. Cutter.

He surveys the room and EXHALES, deeply satisfied.

MR. CUTTER
Well then. The gang's all here. So many guns pointed at so many heads.

MINKOWSKI
Before anything happens, I want to go over the deal again. I want to *actually* hear it from you.

MR. CUTTER
But, of course, Renée. We're going to do a trade. You will assume Command of the Sol. You will be given authorization to leave the Hephaestus. Anyone who wishes you join you and who you consent to allow onboard *your* craft will be allowed to go with you - including the Hephaestus's Mother Program. Meanwhile, the current crew of the Sol will take custody of the Hephaestus. We'll go our separate ways, and keep smiling through 'til we all meet again some sunny day, very far away from here.

Eiffel and Minkowski exchange a look.

EIFFEL
What's the catch?

MR. CUTTER
No catch. Here, as a sign of our good intentions... Rachel?

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

Rachel pulls an ipad out of her pocket. She makes a few ADJUSTMENTS. A DIGITAL PROCESS starts to RUN.

MINKOWSKI
Wait, wait, what are you doing?

RACHEL
Relax. Just... there.

There's a CHIME as the process completes.

HERA
Whoa. Hello?

RACHEL
I just transferred the A.I.'s consciousness from the Hephaestus to the Sol.

HERA
Oh my... Holy - okay, this is different.

EIFFEL
Hera? You okay? Talk to us, baby.

HERA
I'm - I'm fine Eiffel. Great even. Wow, this is a *nice* ship. Way more processing power than the Hephaestus.
(a thought occurs)
God, is this what it's like for you guys with caffeine? I totally get the coffee thing now.

RACHEL
Take it slow, it'll be a couple of minutes before you can really control the physical functions.

PRYCE
And it'll be a couple of *months* before I get all the settings back to what they *should* be...

MR. CUTTER
Renée? Are we good?

BEAT. Everyone stares at her. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
One more thing.

There's a few GROANS from around the room.

JACOBI
Minkowski...

MINKOWSKI
Just a moment, Jacobi.

JACOBI
Yeah, that's easy for *you* to say. You're one of the gun pointers, not one of the gun pointees.

MINKOWSKI
Trust me, you want this.

She turns back to Cutter.

MR. CUTTER
I thought we had a deal, Renée.

MINKOWSKI
Well, I'm sorry, but people being exceedingly generous *at me* has a way of making me skittish, so the exchange rate's gone up. One more thing, and then we can trade.

MR. CUTTER
I'm listening...

BEAT. Minkowski stares at Cutter evenly. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
If you want this deal to go through, you're gonna tell us who the hell you are and what the hell you're doing up here.

MR. CUTTER
Excuse me?

MINKOWSKI
Who. Are. You.
(re: Pryce)
Both of you. Because... the way you are, the things you've done...

Cutter considers her for a BEAT. Then, as he's about to open his mouth -

EIFFEL
Don't bother, Commander.
(BEAT)
I think I figured it out.

MR. CUTTER
Oh? Really?

EIFFEL
Yeah.

MR. CUTTER
Well, please. Tell us.

EIFFEL
Well... it's pretty obvious, isn't it? You're super old, but you look like you're twenty-eight. You never seem to need to sleep, or to eat. You got all this crazy sci-fi tech. You know everything about everything... and everyone... even the aliens... before anyone else does. And you're a teeny little bit obsessed with our long-distance friends.
(BEAT)
So... I'm thinking you're not from our neighborhood, are you? This is kind of like a homecoming for you... isn't it?

There's a LONG BEAT. And then -

Both Cutter and Pryce BURST OUT LAUGHING. HYSTERICALLY.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uh... ?

For a LONG BEAT Cutter and Pryce laugh just laugh - high, cold. Finally -

MR. CUTTER
(recovering)
Oh Doug... I love you. Never, ever change. That was... oh my God. I cannot even begin to tell you how much I needed that. Miranda can you even -

PRYCE
(also still laughing)
I know, I - I hadn't heard *that* one before.

MR. CUTTER
Phew... No, Doug. We're not aliens.

PRYCE
Of course we're not aliens.

MR. CUTTER
No, we're very much humans, just like you. We're just a little bit... modified.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
And very, very motivated.
(back to Minkowski)
All right, Renée - we got a big laugh out of it, but let's get down to business now. Do we have a deal?

BEAT. But finally -

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Fine. Deal.

MR. CUTTER
Splendid. Let's get started.

RIEMANN
You can send over Doctor Pryce, Minkowski.

Minkowski LAUGHS.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, not a chance. You send over Captain Lovelace first.

RIEMANN
Lower your weapon, Minkowski, and send over Doctor Pryce. I won't ask again.

LOVELACE
Oh for God's - we can go at the same time, okay?

MR. CUTTER
Thank you, Isabel. Very sensible.

He CLAPS his hands once.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
On the count of three, all right? One, two, twenty-three and skidoo!

Riemann lowers his weapon and allows Lovelace to begin walking forward.

After a couple steps, she hesitates. Pryce hasn't started walking.

RIEMANN
Halt!
(Lovelace does)
Let Doctor Pryce go, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
I'm... I'm not doing anything!
She's free to go.

PRYCE
Maybe I don't want to. Maybe *I* don't find the terms of the deal acceptable.

EIFFEL
You... You want to stay with *us*?

PRYCE
No, boy. A emphatic and decided no.

MR. CUTTER
Miranda - what are you doing?

PRYCE
Altering the deal. You're being too generous, Marcus. After all, my equipment is still on the Sol. And I'm not in the habit of letting troublesome A.I.s go before I'm finished with them.

HERA
You stay the hell away from me.

PRYCE
What a naive thought. You'll never be rid of me, 214. I saw to that a *long* time ago. Minkowski: you can have the Sol, and you can have Captain Lovelace *or* Hera. Not both.

EIFFEL
Are you kidding?

PRYCE
I assure you I am being very serious. And I would make the choice quickly if I -

BANG! It's a gunshot.

After a moment of shock, we hear a voice CRY OUT in pain.

JACOBI
(breathing fast)
What... What the hell?! You - you shot me!

MR. CUTTER
Yes, Daniel, I did indeed.

JACOBI
Why did you shoot **me?** What did **I** do?

MR. CUTTER
Renée, you have until Mr. Jacobi bleeds out to bring Colonel Kepler and Doctor Pryce here.

PRYCE
Marcus, what are you playing at? Just put an end to this thing.

MR. CUTTER
Enough. Enough, Miranda.

There's more menace in those three words than in anything's Cutter's said in the last three episodes.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
The deal is still on. The terms and conditions - *our* terms and conditions, Renée - still stand.

BEAT. Eiffel and Minkowski are still a little bit stunned.

We hear a deeply gross SQUELCH and another CRY of pain from Jacobi as his bleeding starts to get worse.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
One slightly damaged hostage for one slightly damaged hostage. We're doing this. And we're doing it now.

Minkowski stares at Cutter, silently furious. Jacobi GROANS in pain.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace, get Jacobi. You come with me, *Doctor*.

There's an LONG beat of Minkowski more or less pushing Pryce forward, as Lovelace doubles back and fireman-carries Jacobi over to the opposite wall.

KEPLER
(to Eiffel)
So... Should I just... You know?

EIFFEL
Go away, Kepler.

Kepler sheepishly walks back over towards the Command side of the room, drawing level with Pryce and Minkowski.

KEPLER
I'll take Doctor Pryce from here, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Fine. Good luck with her.

PRYCE
Better to be lucky than good, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Go.

A BEAT as Kepler and Pryce make it back to the other side. We hear RIPPING as Lovelace dresses Jacobi's wound.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
There. You have your people, Cutter.

MR. CUTTER
And you have yours, Renée. No hard feelings, I hope, Daniel? But sometimes you have to... make an executive call in order to speed things along.

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah. You've got a schedule to keep.

MR. CUTTER
I really do.

MINKOWSKI
Then get the hell off my ship.

Cutter nods in acquiescence, and SNAPS his fingers. He turns around and -

MR. CUTTER
Actually... just one more thing, Renée.

MINKOWSKI
What?

MR. CUTTER
Rachel? Give your gun to Victor. You're going to go with them.

RACHEL
I am?

MINKOWSKI
No, she's -

MR. CUTTER
All the systems on the Sol are still biometrically locked, Renée. That includes not only navigation, but also the medical equipment. Rachel can give you access to all of them. And... if you're that curious about what we're doing up here... she'll fill you in on the details.

RACHEL
Understood, sir.

BEAT. But finally -

MINKOWSKI
Fine. Come on.

Rachel walks over, joining Minkowski and her team. They hit a switch, and a DOOR OPENS. As the door begins to close, Minkowski looks back, seeing -

MR. CUTTER
Pleasure doing business with you.

And as the door shuts, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 20 MINUTES LATER

Pryce alone in the bridge. She's absorbed in one of the consoles, TYPING away on her iPad device.

After a moment, the door OPENS, and Cutter enters.

MR. CUTTER
Knock, knock.

PRYCE
Marcus.

MR. CUTTER
How are you?

PRYCE
Fine, now that I can see again.

MR. CUTTER
I'm glad to hear that.
(BEAT)
I was worried.

PRYCE
(not looking up from her work)
Mmm-hmm.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
Is that all you have to say?

Pryce glances up from her work, and fixes him with a withering look.

PRYCE
Oh, please. What do you want, Marcus? An apology?

His face is inscrutable.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
What you did was reckless. It might even be a mistake.

BEAT. Still nothing from Cutter.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
So you want me to apologize for... *what*? Trying to clean up after your mess? *Again*? You care too much about your little moments on the stage. Making sure that everyone knows how *clever* you are is **not** more important than -

MR. CUTTER
Be quiet.

That words rings out. Like they're an insult, like a slap to the face. After a BEAT -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I was worried.

PRYCE
What? For me?

MR. CUTTER
I was. You were in danger. Surrounded by enemies. And, despite what you sometimes seem to think, you're not immortal.

PRYCE
Yet.

MR. CUTTER
Does it look like it's a good time for you to be funny?

It really doesn't *sound* like the time. She nods: *proceed*.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Of course I was worried for you. But it's okay. Enemies? I can deal with those. Physics, I can deal with. What I can't deal with is the smartest woman in the world *improvising* when her life is on the line. Then I start to be worried... **because** of you.

She stares at him, motionless.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
And that's a horse of a different color. Because when that happens, **who knows** what's going to happen next! I didn't... and unless I'm very much mistaken, neither did you.

Her silence is eloquent: *he's not very much mistaken*.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
That... is not the deal. The deal is that I handle people. And you let me do my job, and you do your job. And your job, your singular task in this particular scenario, was to **back my play**. And you didn't. You showed no respect for my side of our partnership.
(BEAT)
So... in the future, when I say, "I was worried," you say, "Thank you Marcus." And then I say...

PRYCE
(nodding)
"You're welcome, Miranda.
(MORE)

PRYCE (CONT'D)
You're welcome." You're absolutely right. I apologize.

Cutter SIGHS, and then is back to upbeat self again.

MR. CUTTER
Apology accepted. Friends?

He extends his hand.

PRYCE
(taking his hand)
Partners.

They turn away from each other, and towards the window. A BEAT, then -

PRYCE (CONT'D)
That's a hell of a sunset.

MR. CUTTER
Quite a sight, isn't it?

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - THREE HOURS LATER

Minkowski on the bridge, having just finished running scans, pulling apart consoles, and otherwise checking for boobytraps aboard the Sol. Rachel watches from a corner, profoundly bored.

A door OPENS and Lovelace, Jacobi (limping), and Eiffel all enter, having completed their own inspections.

MINKOWSKI
Please tell me one of you found something.

JACOBI
Yeah, don't ask about the guy who just got out of surgery's health or anything. I'm *fine* by the way.

RACHEL
Automated medbay's basically a five-star surgeon. Quit whining.

MINKOWSKI
(to Rachel)
You: shut up.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(to Jacobi)
You: I'm glad you're still alive.
(to everyone)
Everyone else: *report*.

LOVELACE
Engine's clean as a whistle, and nothing seems to be going on with any the support systems.

EIFFEL
And all aux systems look good.

MINKOWSKI
Hera? How are you doing? Anything?

HERA
(trying chocolate for the very first time)
Uh... I'm pretty *great* actually. There's a bunch more processing power on the Sol. The RAM speed for this amount of space is kind of unbelievable, and there are sensors I can access here I'd never -

JACOBI
She meant about finding out how Cutter's screwed us, Hera. Also, ow.

HERA
Oh, yeah. Right. Um, no, all automated and AI-function programs check out. The code's clean, as far as I can tell.

Minkowski and Lovelace share a look of displeasure.

LOVELACE
Oh, good.

RACHEL
I really don't see what the problem is here.

EIFFEL
Well, Ms. Young, the problem is that - to quote one of the greatest admirals of all time - IT'S A TRAP!

MINKOWSKI
No way Cutter just *lets* us leave. Something has to be wrong here.
(MORE)

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
And we're not going anywhere until we figure out what it is.

RACHEL
There's nothing wrong with the ship, I promise you. That's not why you're not gonna leave.

BEAT. Everyone caught that.

MINKOWSKI
What?

RACHEL
I said there's nothing wrong with -

EIFFEL
No, no, no: the other thing. Is there a reason why we're not gonna leave?

RACHEL
Of course there is. You're not gonna go anywhere once you know what the *plan* is.

LOVELACE
And why in the name of everything that's holy would we even listen to another second of Cutter's lies?

But behind them, a DOOR OPENS.

KEPLER
(entering)
Let her speak, Captain. You want to hear to what she has to say.

MINKOWSKI
Kepler? What is this about?

KEPLER
Long story short? The end of the world, Minkowski. The end of the world.

WOLF 359

"VOLTE FACE"

Written by:

Sarah Shachat

Story by:

Gabriel Urbina & Sarah Shachat

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE (STATIONARY) - EXECUTIVE ENTRANCE - 1100 HOURS

We hear a set of unusual sounds for Wolf 359: cicadas chirping, wind rushing, the BEEPING of trucks backing up - all the ambient sounds of an AIR FIELD. (Though we hear it muffled, as if through a wall.)

After a moment, the DOOR to the bridge OPENS, revealing -

NASH
Well... it's about time.

She walks in, taking in her surroundings. After a moment -

NASH (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Hello?
(no response)
Hello?
(still nothing)
Is there anyone here?
(the silence echoes)
I guess not... one big, honking private plane, all to my-

ENLIL (OVER P.A.)
Hello!

NASH
AHHH!

ENLIL
Sorry, sorry, didn't mean to spook you.

NASH
It's - it's okay. Where - where are you?

ENLIL
Just a moment. Still processing the latest weather report. Oooh, looks like some fireworks going up over Hawaii later. Better reroute around them. I mean, nothing against fireworks, they're awesome. There's colors and a bang and this really nice smell, apparently, but they can be a bit of a navigational -

NASH
(looking around)
Could - I'm sorry - could we go back to **where are you**?

ENLIL
Ah, sorry. Terribly rude of me. Just doing some pre-flight checks in the flight deck. And, I suppose, also talking to you, sir and/or madam!

NASH
You're... You're the pilot?

ENLIL
That's me! Sensus Unit 196, designation Enlil, at your service.

NASH
Ah. You're the... *autopilot*.
(muttered)
Of course. Why keep a pilot on retainer when you can just *build* one.

ENLIL
One moment please, just running through a few of the... Oil quantity: normal.

As he runs through each system, we hear various DIGITAL MARKERS adjusting and resetting to reflect the information.

ENLIL (CONT'D)
Fire warning system... yeah, that should work! Flight recorder... on. And... done! We are all set for takeoff.

NASH
Good. And... where do I go?

ENLIL
Ah... are... are you going to be flying with us today, sir and/or madam?

NASH
(is there a problem?)
I am. Seems like it'll be *quite* the adventure.

ENLIL
Ah. Umm, well: hooray. But also... *ah*.

NASH
Yes?

ENLIL
Err... well, I thought it was just going to be Mr. Clarke and Mr. Cutter today. I mean, with them having to get back to Los Angeles for the VX-3 debut...

NASH
Why don't you check again?

There's an BEEP. And then after a BEAT -

ENLIL
I'm - I'm sorry, but I have checked. I've been checking forty-seven and a half times per second for the past two minutes. And it still - umm, wait, let me just make sure - yep: I'm *still* just getting two passengers on the manifest.

NASH
I think that -

CLARKE
Ms. Nash!

NASH
Hmm?

She turns around. Her expression drops perceivably.

NASH (CONT'D)
(low, muttered)
Oh... here we go.

At the top of the bridge is a man. His name is DAVID CLARKE. He is tall, dresses impeccably, and looks, in a word, stern.

We hear his FOOTSTEPS as he walks towards us. After a BEAT -

NASH (CONT'D)
Mr. Clarke. It's good to see you.

CLARKE
You too, Miss Nash. What are you -

NASH
Maybe you could help us out with this little... contretemps. It seems -

CLARKE
Ms. Nash -

NASH
(pressing on)
It seems... that my name got left off the manifest for this flight. How on Earth could *that* have happened?

CLARKE
We can talk about this -

NASH
(very pointed)
I'm **sure** it was just a silly, little mistake... **wasn't it?** Or do I need to get on the phone with my editor?

BEAT. Then, CLARKE SIGHS.

CLARKE
I thought you wouldn't be able to join us today. The driver said -

NASH
Oh, I took my own car.

CLARKE
We thought that awful accident right by your hotel might have been a problem for -

NASH
Oh, I changed hotels two nights ago. I didn't mention that? Sorry, it must have... slipped my mind.

CLARKE
Yes...

NASH
Well, it all worked out, didn't it?

She's all but openly defiant. Clearly there's some history.

CLARKE
Enlil: please add Miss Andrea Nash to the manifest for today's flight.

ENLIL
Umm, very good sir, but -

CLARKE
And get us ready for take off. *Quietly*.

ENLIL
... yes, sir.

NASH
Shall we?

CLARKE
Yes. This way please.

NASH
After you.

Clarke hits a PANEL, a DOOR OPENS. Nash follows him into -

INT. AIRPLANE (STATIONARY) - CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The interior of the plane feels airy and open, with several comfortable lounge chairs and coffee tables forward, and a set of private rooms towards the aft.

Nash WHISTLES appreciatively.

NASH
Not bad, Mr. Clarke. Not bad at all.

CLARKE
It's a very special aircraft.

NASH
Clearly. Custom made for the boss, huh?

CLARKE
You're one to talk.
(she faces him: *hmm?*)
You *did* fly from New York to Tokyo, just so you can fly back to Los Angeles with us, right?

NASH
Well, I get great deals on my miles.

CLARKE
Very funny.

NASH
You know how this works, David. They want this interview, and if I can only get half an hour of the boss's time when he's thirty-five thousand feet over the Pacific... so be it.
(shrug)
Besides, *I'm* not the one that's paying through the nose for this. Now, be a sweetheart: where do I get set up?

She shoots him a 500-watt smile. He gags inwardly.

The DOOR to one of the private rooms OPENS and Clarke gestures inside.

CLARKE
Right through here. This is one of the private offices. You can make yourself comfortable.

NASH
Awww, see? You *can* be useful. Tell me: did that hurt? Did it physically hurt?

CLARKE
(yes)
I have... no idea... what you mean, Ms. Nash.

NASH
Of course you don't. Thanks, David. See you in a bit.

With a small wave, Nash ENTERS the room and SHUTS THE DOOR.

Clarke SIGHS and rubs his temples for a moment.

CLARKE
Enlil?

ENLIL
Yes, sir?

CLARKE
Keep an eye on her. Let me know if she... anythings.

ENLIL
She seems nice.

CLARKE
She's an investigative reporter, Enlil. One that specializes in tech sector scandals. She's not nice, she's *smug*, and I want to know if she so much as *breathes* funny.

ENLIL
(got it)
Yes, sir.

CLARKE
Thank you. Open cabinet three, please. Let's get organized.

We hear a DISTINCTIVE HISS as one in a row of compartments against the wall OPENS of its own accord.

Clarke reaches in, retrieving a stack of papers.

As he shuffles the papers into a folder, there's a DING! Clarke straightens up and looks expectantly at a door. A moment later, it opens of its own accord, revealing -

MR. CUTTER
Hello hello, David. I trust everything is well.

CLARKE
Yes, Mr. Cutter. Are you ready for today's flight?

MR. CUTTER
Ah. Man must rise above the Earth - to the top of the atmosphere and beyond - for only thus will he fully understand the world in which he lives.

BEAT.

ENLIL
Does that mean - ?

MR. CUTTER
That means we're ready, yes.

CLARKE
Close the cabin door, Enlil.

With a CLANK, it closes. And after a moment, the plane's ENGINES WHIRR to life. Then there's a BING-BONG! on the PA.

ENLIL
Good morning, everyone! Please be advised that the cabin door is now closed. We will be taxiing to the runway in just a moment. As we do, please turn your attention to our mandatory safety video. It is, of course, on mute, so it might be a *bit* hard to make out, but maybe you'll catch something interesting that way. Or you can make up your own dialogue! Or, don't turn your attention to it at all! I'm not the boss of you.

MR. CUTTER
Truly, you are the wisest among us, Enlil.

ENLIL
Just happy to be of assistance, sir.

MR. CUTTER
What do you have for me, David?

CLARKE
(handing him a folder)
Finalized release specs for the VX-3 for your approval. First pass at potential candidates for the Artemis and Hephaestus missions.

MR. CUTTER
Mm-hmm, mm-hmm...

CLARKE
There's some interesting chatter on new Chinese fuel cells.

MR. CUTTER
Oooh, juicy.

CLARKE
There's also... the reporter. Sir.

MR. CUTTER
The reporter?

CLARKE
Yes. After takeoff you will be giving an interview to Andrea Nash.

MR. CUTTER
(more amused then angry)
I'm going to *what*?

CLARKE
She's on the business beat at -

MR. CUTTER
I assume you did your best to -

CLARKE
Of course, sir. She's proved... very resourceful. And *eager*.

MR. CUTTER
She must be, to get the better of you. Do you hate her?

CLARKE
With the fiery intensity of a thousand burning suns, sir.

Cutter leafs through the folder, scanning a page.

MR. CUTTER
Well, then. If that's the case... sounds like fun!
(turns the page)
Will she be any trouble?

There's a BEAT as Clarke thinks.

CLARKE
No. She won't be, sir. But *she* thinks she will.

MR. CUTTER
Good to know. Which room did you put her in?

CLARKE
Room two, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Thank you. And Enlil? Give us a bit of privacy, please. Nothing outside of flight announcements in Room Two.

ENLIL
Awwww... Also, yes sir, but still: *awwww...*

MR. CUTTER
See you in the air, gentlemen.

With that, Cutter OPENS the door and ENTERS -

INT. AIRPLANE (STATIONARY) - ROOM TWO - CONTINUOUS

He finds Nash seated on the couch.

MR. CUTTER
Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm -

NASH
Marcus Cutter. A pleasure to *finally* meet you. Andrea Nash.

MR. CUTTER
Likewise. I'm so glad you could join us today.

NASH
(shaking his hand)
Oh, please. I appreciate <u>you</u> making the time. I know things must be hectic this week.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, yes. Busy, busy, busy. Has anyone offered you anything? A drink? Snacks? Super fluffy pillow?

NASH
A chai would be great.

Cutter LAUGHS.

MR. CUTTER
One of the many nice things about an autopilot-guided aircraft: instant barista.

Cutter PRESSES A BUTTON. Almost instantly, a slat opens up in the table and a warm chai appears. Nash takes it.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Here you are... Do you prefer Ms. Nash? Andrea? Andi?

NASH
Well, do you go by Director? Or Mr. Cutter? Or are you one of those super-bosses who uses first names because you're all just one big happy family?

For a BEAT, Cutter just looks at her. Then he smiles.

MR. CUTTER
Ms. Nash, then.

NASH
Mr. Cutter.

At this point, there's another CHIME over the PA -

ENLIL
Attention all passengers, please prepare for take-off.

The engines ROAR TO LIFE and we hear the plane take off.

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - ROOM TWO - CONTINUOUS

After a moment -

ENLIL
Attention all passengers: we have now reached our cruising altitude. Please feel free to move about the cabin, *and* to check out the really neat cloud shaped like a Tonka trunk off the port side!

NASH
Your AI is a bit...

MR. CUTTER
Yes. A personality as big as the sky.

NASH
Odd trait to program into a pilot.

MR. CUTTER
Sensus units are funny things, Ms. Nash. In a lot of ways, the... wand chooses the wizard, so to speak.

NASH
Sure. But, you can get rid of the Slytherins if you want.

MR. CUTTER
They're the most interesting ones.

Nash CHUCKLES.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Shall we get started?

Nash produces a TAPE RECORDER and sets it on the table.

NASH
Do you mind if I record this?

MR. CUTTER
Of course not. But... you don't use your phone?

NASH
(bit of a chuckle)
Oh, writing about the tech lobby has made me more... appreciative of analog recorders. They have their charms.

MR. CUTTER
Such as?

NASH
Such as the fact that no matter how smart people get or how good tech becomes... but there isn't anyone that can remotely hack into one.

MR. CUTTER
Not... yet, anyway.

NASH
That's true, I suppose. But for the time being...

She holds up the recorder to his face, and CLICKS A SWITCH. The TAPE STARTS TO RUN.

MR. CUTTER
Well... this is certainly going to be an interesting four hour flight.

NASH
It's - It's a ten hour flight to LA.

MR. CUTTER
Not on this plane, Ms. Nash. Not on this plane. Let's get started.

And off of that, we go into our -

OPENING CREDITS

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - ROOM TWO - 1215 HOURS

We hear the STEADY HUM of Nash's recorder, now placed between her and Cutter. She takes a DEEP BREATH.

MR. CUTTER
So where would you like to start?

NASH
Lets ease into this. To begin... could I just have your name? And a bit about what you do?

Cutter SCOFFS just the tiniest bit: *really*? But...

MR. CUTTER
My name is Marcus Cutter. I'm the Director of Communications for Goddard Futuristics, and I handle a couple portfolios for our Special Projects Division.

NASH
And how long have you held that position?

MR. CUTTER
It'll be three years next April.

NASH
Mm-hm...

She's pulled out a small NOTEBOOK, and is SCRIBBLING A NOTE. He watches, his eyes narrowed. Once she's finally done...

NASH (CONT'D)
Could you tell me a little bit about the history of Goddard Futuristics? Give me the overview?

BEAT. Cutter eyes her, considering an unusual chess move.

MR. CUTTER
Is there a reason you'd like my perspective on that? It's all in the public record.

NASH
I just want it on *the* record, in your own words. If you don't mind.

MR. CUTTER
Wouldn't it make more sense to -

NASH
Please. Indulge me. I want to hear it from you.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
All the way back?

NASH
All the way back. If you don't mind.

MR. CUTTER
(CLEARS HIS THROAT)
Well... way back in the turn of the century, there was quite a kerfuffle over this teeny little invention - you might have heard about it - called *airplanes*. For a decade or two, that was all anyone could talk about. After the Russians were the first to achieve lift off... well, I think we all sort of decided we needed a new technological race. Something to take our mind off the sting of defeat.

As he speaks, we hear Nash occasionally JOT DOWN a note on a small writing pad.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
We all kind of decided, well, it's not *actually* about flight, that's not the key. It's all about who can get to Mach One first - who'll be the first to break through that pesky ol' sound barrier.

NASH
And that's where Goddard came in?

MR. CUTTER
Which one of us is telling this story, Ms. Nash?

NASH
I'm sorry. Please.

BEAT. Then -

MR. CUTTER
In 1910, a pair of aviation tycoons met a young physicist by the name of Goddard. Mr. Goddard was a... very gifted individual. Had incredible ideas. But tended to strike people as a big... strange. It tends to happen when you're... ahead of your time.

NASH
Of course.

MR. CUTTER
It was a good partnership. They got him boatloads of money, he gave them designs for liquid-fueled rocketry. They got to Mach One in 1912, and became national heroes. After the War, they started the Wright-Goddard Aeronautics Company.

NASH
And after that?

Cutter stares at her: *you really want the whole thing?* She stares back: impassive.

MR. CUTTER
(*fine*)
Well... A lot of people would've called it a day there. Instead, Goddard restructured his company around R&D for spaceflight.

NASH
How'd he do with that?

MR. CUTTER
(counting off with his fingers)
Escape velocity in 1929, first manned space orbit in 1948, all the intrigue with the moon in the early 50's... am I boring you?

NASH
Not at all. And after that? What was the next race?

Cutter SMIRKS.

MR. CUTTER
Artificial Intelligence, of course. The Wright-Goddard company was pretty much the first corporation to invest in A.I. research.

NASH
Why?

MR. CUTTER
Think about it, Miss Nash. The early, *crude* spacecrafts? Anyone can fly those. A *monkey* can fly those, if you don't mind a bit of turbulence. But to really go places, you need something a bit more complicated. And once you start to skip down that yellow brick road, it's only a matter of time before you realize you need pilots that can do things no monkey could ever manage.

Nash takes a NOTE, nodding.

NASH
When did they rename the company?

MR. CUTTER
1974. By then we'd started to branch out into other fields. Biomedicine. Chemistry. Alternative energy.

NASH
And after that?

MR. CUTTER
That... pretty much brings us to the present. After NASA lost the funding for its Alpha Centauri missions, we were more happy to give them a new home in the private sector. Since then, we've run more than a hundred and fifty privately funded expeditions into deep space. And next week, we're putting out a shiny new engine that will help us reach even further into the stars, The End.

NASH
How far out are we talking? Ten lightyears? Fifty?

MR. CUTTER
(eyes narrowing)
Somewhere... thereabouts. Yes.

NASH
Hmm...
(BEAT)
And what would you say is... *your* race, Mr. Cutter?

MR. CUTTER
(all smiles)
Oh, I'm just a humble division head. It's not my ship to steer.

NASH
Isn't it, though?
(off some of her notes:)
Looking at the company, structure... the "special projects" division doesn't really report to any other department... or share it's research. Neither do a couple of the R&D divisions. Since about... 1976, no department has had access to all the others... except for *Communications*.

MR. CUTTER
Well, that is kind of the point of a Communications Department, Ms. Nash. We *communicate*.

NASH
And how are you finding the department since you came on board?

MR. CUTTER
Oh. it's... very fulfilling. But this piece isn't about me, is it?

NASH
Maybe not, but I'm interested in your perspective. Your directives set the course for -

MR. CUTTER
Our <u>board</u> sets the direction.

NASH
But you're the one that actually gets it done. In a lot of ways, one might argue that the Communications Director might be the most influential position at Goddard Futuristics.
(BEAT)
And you... still haven't answered my question: what race are <u>you</u> running, Mr. Cutter?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
People. It's us. I think we're what's next.

NASH
What do you mean? What about people?

MR. CUTTER
Everything about people. The very concept of people.

NASH
What?

MR. CUTTER
Well, it's... Here: think about the Internet.

NASH
... okay?

MR. CUTTER
Think about what everyone's been saying for the last two decades: it's changed how we act, how we think, how we experience the world. But there's still a middle man.

NASH
And that is... ?

MR. CUTTER
You still have the browser window. That's not going to last. Sooner or later, we'll start changing things... directly. And since that's the way we're going, I think that... whoever gets there first? They'll have a real opportunity.

NASH
To sell Casper mattresses?

MR. CUTTER
To change the world. For the better.

NASH
And what does that look like?

BEAT.

Cutter considers the question. But he's interrupted by a BUZZER, and a second later the DOOR OPENS and Clarke sticks his head in.

CLARKE
Apologies for interrupting, but we need you at the secure phone, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Ah, yes. I'm sorry, Ms. Nash. We're in the early stages of organizing some field trips out to Luyten 726, Ross 154, and Wolf 359, and they just need me to -

NASH
Please. Take the call.

MR. CUTTER
Thank you. Be back shortly.

Cutter SHUTS THE DOOR behind him, walking out into -

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - CABIN - CONTINUOUS

MR. CUTTER
That was twenty minutes?

CLARKE
Yes, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Hmm...
(BEAT)
I think you may have underestimated her.

CLARKE
She wants to break another scandal, and I'm sure she will, sir. But it won't involve us.

MR. CUTTER
No... It' something else. She hasn't asked me about the VX-3.

CLARKE
Maybe I *overestimated* her, sir.

MR. CUTTER
No... Something's off here. She's after something. Or maybe she already has it.
(BEAT)
David... did Miranda leave any of her restraining bolts on the plane?

BEAT.

CLARKE
I'd... I'd have to check on that, sir.

MR. CUTTER
Please do, David. Please do.

CLARKE
Sir... do you really think she requires that *drastic* a touch?

MR. CUTTER
I'm not sure yet. I'm going go back in there for a bit and see. Let me know what you find.

CLARKE
Yes, sir.

With that, Cutter OPENS the door, and walks back into -

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - ROOM TWO - CONTINUOUS

Nash seemingly hasn't moved from the couch.

MR. CUTTER
Now, where were we?

NASH
How we're going to change the world for the better.

MR. CUTTER
Of course. That. If I can actually ask *you*, Ms. Nash - this piece of yours...
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'm getting the sense this isn't the standard profile one writes for a new model launch.

NASH
I'm... not quite sure what it is. Not yet.

MR. CUTTER
Your editors are willing to fly you halfway around the world and back for something you're not quite sure of yet?

There's a distinctive HISS! from outside the door.

NASH
What was that?

MR. CUTTER
We have some old equipment lockers on here. David must be looking for something in one of them.
(BEAT)
Do you have any more questions for me?

NASH
I do.
(BEAT: *how to ask this?*)
You... took over as Communications Director from an interim manager, but are really building on the work of a man named...
(takes her a second to find it in her notes)
... Wyllis Fletcher, correct?

MR. CUTTER
Correct.

NASH
And he took over the department from...
(again: off notes)
... Jonas Highland.

MR. CUTTER
Yes...

HISS! We hear the sound of another locker opening outside.

NASH
(turning pages over)
And before Highland there was R.W. Niemann, then Charles Kerr... William Carter...

MR. CUTTER
And the Communications Department was started in the early 70s by one Mr. Arthur Keller. Why is this of any interest to - ?

NASH
What happened to William Carter?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
What *happened* to him?

NASH
Yes.
(BEAT)
Do you know?

HISS! Clarke opened another locker.

MR. CUTTER
He left the company in early 1992. Saw us through the collapse of the USSR, and... retired, as far as I know.

NASH
Yes, he did retire. At the age of thirty-six.

MR. CUTTER
It *is* a very demanding job. I don't begrudge him wanting a bit of peace and -

NASH
And then vanished of the face of the Earth. There's no record of William Carter after 1992. Anywhere. We looked *very carefully*.

HISS! Clarke opens another locker.

NASH (CONT'D)
Do you have any comment on that?

BEAT. Both people watching each other very carefully.

MR. CUTTER
Why is this of interest to you? You're a business reporter.

NASH
A business is just the people who work in it. And many - in fact, *most* - of the people who really make the decisions for Goddard Futuristics have a habit of vanishing into thin air.

MR. CUTTER
I thought you said you weren't quite sure what you were writing.

NASH
I'm not *quite* sure. But I have an inkling. Care to help me out?

Cutter walks over to the table, PRESSES A BUTTON, and with a RUSH OF AIR, another chai appears. He takes a SIP.

BEAT. Then -

MR. CUTTER
I see. Or I *think* I see. Before I answer you, Ms. Nash, what were the three stars I mentioned to you earlier, just before I left the room?

BEAT. Nash frowns, but...

NASH
Luyten 726, Ross 154, and... Wolf 359.

MR. CUTTER
What do those stars have in common?

NASH
I'm sorry?

MR. CUTTER
What do those stars have in common? What connects them?

NASH
What does that have to do with William Carter?

MR. CUTTER
What do those stars have in common, Ms. Nash?

NASH
Is there a reason you don't want to answer my question, Mr. Cutter?

MR. CUTTER
I'm going to ask you one last time: what do those stars have in common? What is important about them?
(BEAT)
No? Well, I think we're done here.

Cutter picks up his chai and walks to the door. He OPENS it.

NASH
That was cute. But you know I will publish everything, right?

Cutter stops, and turns back to her.

MR. CUTTER
What do you mean, "publish everything?"

NASH
I mean publish *everything*. And you know my editors wouldn't have sprung for a flight across the world if I didn't have **everything.**

Cutter smiles ruefully to himself.

MR. CUTTER
I do know that.

NASH
So that brings us back to William Carter, and changing the world.

MR. CUTTER
Yes it does.

BEAT.

The stalemate is broken up by a KNOCK at the door.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Enter.

CLARKE
Need you on the line again, sir.

Cutter looks to Nash.

NASH
Please. I'm not going anywhere.

Without another word, Cutter EXITS back into -

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - CABIN - CONTINUOUS

And SHUTS the door behind him. For a minute, he and Clarke walk back into the main area of the cabin.

MR. CUTTER
Any updates?

CLARKE
We do have a restraining bolt, sir. It's prepped and ready to go.

MR. CUTTER
You've administered one of these before, right, David?

CLARKE
Yes, sir.

Cutter takes this in, nodding.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
Are we... are we *there*, sir?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
(more to himself)
No. No, not yet. She's not going anywhere, after all.

CLARKE
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
Let's give her some time. We'll go over those candidate profiles, I'll go back in in about half an hour.

CLARKE
And the restraining bolt?

MR. CUTTER
Once I'm in, turn the sound monitors on speaker. If I say the phrase...
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
"Volte Face," that will be your signal. Come in and install the bolt.

CLARKE
Yes, sir.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
Actually, David? Would you open up the wall monitor for me now?

CLARKE
You want to keep an eye on her?

MR. CUTTER
I'd actually like you to go in there. See if you can get her to say anything interesting.

Clarke CLICKS A BUTTON. One of the outside walls LIGHTS UP and shows Nash, still seated on the couch. There's a CRACKLE as we begin to hear the ambient sounds from inside the room.

NASH
(EXHALING, over comms, to herself)
Ooookay... Time for a fresh tape.

We hear CLACKING as she changes out tapes in her recorder.

CLARKE
Just that, sir? See if I can make her say anything... *interesting*?

MR. CUTTER
Just that.

CLARKE
Yes, sir.

Clarke walks to the room, OPENS the door, and SHUTS it behind him. We stay outside with Cutter, who's watching and listening over the monitor.

CLARKE (CONT'D)
(over comms)
He may be a little while on that call, Ms. Nash. Do you need anything?

NASH
(over comms)
No. No, thanks. I'm fine.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
(low, to himself)
She's wondering why you're still there, David. You gotta do *something*... In three.. Two...

NASH
(over comms)
Can I do anything for *you*, Mr. Clarke?

CLARKE
(over comms)
I suppose I'd be... wasting my time if I asked you to... put aside your prejudices? Just during your conversations with Mr. Cutter?

MR. CUTTER
Ah, the loyalty card. Charming.

NASH
(over comms)
What makes you think I'm prejudiced?

CLARKE
(over comms)
You have a bit of a... reputation.

NASH
(over comms)
And you think I'm going to be unfair?

CLARKE
(over comms)
I think you know what makes a good story. And I think sometimes we can warp reality to fit whatever makes a good story. Happens to the best of us.

NASH
(over comms)
And sometimes looking at why people want a story to fit a certain form is a story in itself.
(MORE)

NASH (CONT'D)
And sometimes *those* stories make some people go to jail. Which would be sad, but, you know... happens to the best of us.

MR. CUTTER
She's got you there, David.

CLARKE
(over comms)
Can I give you a bit of advice, Miss Nash?

NASH
(over comms)
What?

CLARKE
(over comms)
Right now you are in a very unique position. Unique and *delicate*. If I were you? I'd think long and hard about how what I say and do could impact that position.

MR. CUTTER
Good. Make her ask if you think she's out of line.

NASH
(over comms)
Mr. Clarke... Let me tell you about my "unique and delicate" position. Right now I'm sitting inside an airplane - an airplane that's... *somewhere* over the Pacific Ocean, that's really the best I can do. I'm taking you at your word that I was added to the passenger manifest, but who knows! I'm thousands of miles from anyone that knows me... or likes me... So: if delivering limp little threats is just a hobby of yours? *Awesome*. Keep it up, you're doing great. But if you were actually hoping to *intimidate* me? You're really not making the most of what you've got on hand.

MR. CUTTER
My, my, my...

NASH
(over comms)
Which makes me believe that, one: you horribly underestimated me when you allowed me to board this plane; and/or two: you're just not as good at your job as you think you are.
(shrugs)
Either way, maybe you should have thought longer... and harder... about how coming in here could impact your delicate position.

MR. CUTTER
(exhales)
Well... that's game, set, and match, David.

Clarke straightens his posture and gives her an almost feral smile.

CLARKE
So glad you're enjoying the flight.

Clarke OPENS the door enters, and shuts it behind him.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
Thank you, David. That was... very informative.

CLARKE
Are you going to go back in there? Or should I get the restraining bolt?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, let's give her another ten minutes to feel pleased with herself.

CLARKE
And then?

Cutter GRINS and CRACKS HIS NECK.

MR. CUTTER
I'll show her how good at my job *I* am.

And on that ominous note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - ROOM TWO - 1330 HOURS

The door OPENS as Cutter enters the room. He finds Nash at the desk now, idly FLIPPING through a book.

MR. CUTTER
Hello, hello.

NASH
Hello. I wasn't sure if you were going to come back.

MR. CUTTER
You thought I scare that easily?

NASH
Not really, no.

Nash CLICKS ON her recorder. Cutter sees it, CHUCKLES, and RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

MR. CUTTER
So: who is William Carter really?

NASH
I'd very much like to know.

MR. CUTTER
Ah, but this time *I* was asking the question. You tell me.

NASH
I don't know. Kind of why I'm here.

MR. CUTTER
You have an educated guess.
(BEAT)
Go on. Tell me what you think happened.

BEAT.

NASH
And you'll tell me if I'm right?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I'll tell you if you've... got a good story.
(BEAT)
Please.

BEAT as Nash collects her thoughts. She EXHALES.

NASH
Communications basically runs Goddard Futuristics.

MR. CUTTER
I think you'll find that our operations team -

NASH
Yes, yes, yes, but you're the *nerve center*. You're the only one that has oversight. Whatever the de jure arrangement is, whoever runs Communications is the de facto leader of the company.

MR. CUTTER
Why would *anyone* go through all the trouble of setting *that* up?

NASH
Well... Have you ever heard the story of the Earl of Oxford? And William Shakespeare?

MR. CUTTER
Is this the one where they both walk into a bar?

NASH
No. The theory goes that the nobleman was a brilliant playwright, but he couldn't write what he wanted and keep his reputation. So he arranged things with a local actor. He'd take the Earl's work, he'd the credit, and... play the role of Shakespeare.

MR. CUTTER
And what does this have to do with our missing friend?

BEAT. It's cards-on-the-table time...

NASH
I think someone... or a group of someones... has some very specific ideas about how the future of technology should look.

MR. CUTTER
The Illuminati strike at long last? Or perhaps our alien overlords?

NASH
No, I don't think it's anything like that. Carter's the only Director of Communications who left behind any kind of paper trail -

MR. CUTTER
Paper... ? Ah, you mean the survival manual?

NASH
(don't distract me)
No one willingly takes on this kind of power and just... embraces *total anonymity* after they've handed it back. That's not human nature.

MR. CUTTER
The implication being that... what? Someone *played* the role of Carter? And the others?
(off her silence)
But then why retire Carter after so short a tenure? Why go through all that trouble all over again?

NASH
For the same reason **you're** not going to hold this job for more than a decade: you're a terror to work for, you make rather flamboyant examples of your enemies, and with the results you get, you won't avoid being promoted up the ranks for much longer.
(BEAT)
So? How'd I do? Was that a good story?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
(slowly, deliberately)
Not bad, Ms. Nash. Not bad. I think you can be very happy with what you know. And I think *I* can be very happy with what you can only guess.
(BEAT)
Are we done? Or not quite?

NASH
Not quite. Just one more thing.

Cutter shakes his head, but in amusement.

MR. CUTTER
Okay. I'll bite. What else, Ms. Nash?

NASH
Matthew Newman.

BEAT.

NASH (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter?

BEAT.

BEAT.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
What did you say?

NASH
Matthew Newman. He was Vice President of Product at Goddard - well, Goddard-Wright back then - in the late sixties. I'd like to ask you about him.

So we've made jokes about long silences in other Wolf 359 scripts. But I am not kidding when I write that what follows Nash's request is a full, agonizing 30 SECONDS of SILENCE.

During this, Nash watches every muscle in Cutter's face tense and snap, as though he's been turned to stone. She's seen the color drain from his face - except for his eyes, which take on an almost feral brightness.

He looks at her, almost looking past her. She waits for him to move, to speak, as long as she dares. But finally -

NASH (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter?

SILENCE.

NASH (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter?

Cutter walks over to the desk, sits down, and OPENS on the drawers, still not responding.

NASH (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter? Did you hear what I asked you?

MR. CUTTER
(serious Cutter voice)
I did hear you.

BEAT. Cutter is rummaging in the desk.

NASH
Well?

Cutter finds what he's looking for in the desk. He pulls out a gun, COCK IT, and then lays on the desk.

MR. CUTTER
Well, this became a whole different interview.

NASH
Why is that?

MR. CUTTER
Because now there's another question in the air: are you going to walk off of this plane, or are you going to be *carried* off of it?

BEAT.

Then, improbably, unaccountably, Nash BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

NASH
(still giggling)
Oh. Oh man. I needed that. Thank you. It was brilliant, by the way. Total Clint Eastwood. Oh, your face. That was great.

MR. CUTTER
I'm not sure you grasp what is happening.

Nash finally CATCHES HER BREATH, collects herself.

NASH
Oh, I know *exactly* what's happening. We're at *that* part of the interview.
(MORE)

NASH (CONT'D)
You threaten me - you're much better at it than your flunky, by the by - and I tell you about the code.

MR. CUTTER
Code?

NASH
That's right. Specifically, the code I have to input into my phone every hour, on the hour. And if I don't? Everything I have on Goddard Futuristics, and on all your predecessors, goes live.

MR. CUTTER
Can you do that from this height?

NASH
Like I said, analog tape recorders have their charms. Ones that double as a portable wifi network even more. So... let's put down the gun... and why don't we just skip to the part where you tell me what I want to know. Hmm?

BEAT. Cutter stares at her, steely.

MR. CUTTER
Why you're poking this bear? You already have a great story. You already had everything you needed before you spoke to me. Why push?

NASH
To get the truth. To underst-

MR. CUTTER
Don't insult me. It's not that.
(BEAT)
Tell me who you are. Who you *really* are. And... if I like your answer... maybe I'll tell you about Matthew Newman.

Nash weighs the offer for a moment.

NASH
I already played show and tell. *You* tell me who I am.
(Cutter SCOFFS)
No, go on.
(MORE)

NASH (CONT'D)
Show me how smart you are. If you get it all right, we'll call it quits. You don't have tell me anything about Matthew Newman, and I'll drop everything I have on Goddard Futuristics.
(BEAT)
Educated guess. I know you have one.

Cutter SIGHS, and gives Nash one last look over.

Then, LIGHTNING FAST, but in a calm, level, collected tone:

MR. CUTTER
Andrea Nash isn't your name. In fact, it isn't even your *third* name. Yes, of course I knew, a chameleon can always spot when someone is trying to hide in plain sight.

You came from just enough money to understand how big the gulf was between your family and the people who actually have a chance in life. You balanced your education with, given your little code trick, I'm going to say some very lucrative and *very* immoral activities on the Dark Web. But, given that you boarded this plane at all, something *almost* touched you. Got close. You straightened up, leapt into the arms of one of the Intelligence services, and told yourself it was where you belonged.

But you it was *way* less fun then you wanted it to be - definitely no Clint Eastwoods. For a while you thought that's just what being an adult is - having less fun - but then, no, no, there's something else out there, there *has* to be. And because you *are* very clever, you managed to worm your way out.

The journalist thing has been a great excuse to flex your muscles but it isn't where you belong, either, and you're getting bored again.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Seeing titans of industry quake in their boots is fun the first five, six, times. But that kind of power is fleeting, and you want something more permanent. You want to be at the - how did you put it? Oh yes: the *nerve center* of something - something big, and bold, and different, and anything so long as it's not boring.

There's a LONG BEAT after this speech.

NASH
(low)
Jesus...

MR. CUTTER
So I take it I did pretty well?

NASH
You did, Mr. Cutter. You did. But I didn't get bored. That's not why I left.

MR. CUTTER
Oh? Why, then?

NASH
There was a fire. People died. I realized life is short and the whole truth, justice, and the American Way thing takes too long. It wasn't boredom. It was urgency.

MR. CUTTER
I wouldn't have pegged you to scare like that.

NASH
I don't anymore.
(BEAT)
Hey. Tell me.
(BEAT)
A deal's a deal. You got something wrong, so **tell me.** Matthew Newman.
(BEAT)
Matthew Newman?

MR. CUTTER
Matthew Newman...
(holds out his hand)
... is very pleased to meet you.

Nash frowns, confused: *huh?*

NASH
Wait - what?
(BEAT)
You're -

MR. CUTTER
Oh yes. In the genetically modified flesh, yes.

NASH
I've seen a picture. You look nothing like him. I didn't - I didn't think he was -

MR. CUTTER
Who *did* you think he was? The Earl of Oxford?

NASH
But you'd... You'd have to be -

MR. CUTTER
Now, now. It's not polite to bring up a man's age.

BEAT as Nash picks her jaw up off the floor.

NASH
Okay. Okay. So it's you.

MR. CUTTER
Yes, it's me. What would you like to know?

For the first time, Nash seems genuinely flustered.

NASH
First, um, *how*?

MR. CUTTER
How what?

NASH
(thoughts moving too rapidly for words)
How... How are you here? And - you were *fired*. Back in the sixties. The board pushed you out of the company. So, I mean the aliases I get, but how could you possibly -

MR. CUTTER
Should I, maybe, start at the beginning?

NASH
Yes. Maybe you should.

Cutter EXHALES, thinks for a moment about where he should start, and then -

MR. CUTTER
Do you know anything about Project Menagerie?

NASH
No.

MR. CUTTER
Air force operation. In the late forties. Highly classified. Basically the idea was to station long distance satellites that could daisy-chain information. A precursor to the pulse beacon relay system. There was only problem with it, though.

NASH
What?

MR. CUTTER
A high school kid in a backwater town in California stumbled onto it with his homemade radio telescope. To little Matthew Newman, Project Menagerie just looked like a timed sequence of pulses, definitely mechanical, definitely coming from outside the Earth's atmosphere. He couldn't explain it. His teachers couldn't explain it. The professors at the local college couldn't explain it, either.

NASH
It must've looked like -

MR. CUTTER
Signs of alien life? Oh yes. Quite the thing, to think you've discovered something that would change the course of humanity.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
But someone with clearance on the project got wind of this little amateur discovery. And just like that, the military police was ransacking my home, confiscating all my prototypes, and waving a copy of the Official Secrets Act in my face.

NASH
That explains the interest in space exploration, I suppose.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, the interest was there before. But that is where the... revenge flavor got mixed in.

NASH
When did Goddard enter the picture?

MR. CUTTER
The fifties. After the founders passed away. The new board was trying to buy their way out of a financial slump, acquiring any small company that was doing anything interesting with aviation. At the time, I had a little outfit doing prototyping for the kind of deep space recon that wouldn't get funding for another twenty years.

NASH
And when your company got acquired, you started working at Goddard-Wright?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, for a time I *was* Goddard-Wright. I became a product lead, then a VP, then *the* VP. But you already know how that story ends.

NASH
One of the first of the independent interstellar missions crashed. The public backlash was brutal.

MR. CUTTER
Someone's head had to roll, and the board forced me out. And I figured it might be a good time to... reinvent myself.

NASH
Yeah, no kidding.
(off her notes)
The last record anyone has of Matthew Newman is a memo for an organizational restructure that would *eventually* lead to the communications department.

MR. CUTTER
Ahh, you found *that* old chestnut, did you? That's how you connected Newman with the Communications Director job?

NASH
It was a hunch. I thought Arthur Keller, when he came in and started the Comms Department, he must have some... relationship to you. But he *was* you, wasn't he? They've all been you, just with different names and different faces.

MR. CUTTER
Spaceflight and A.I. weren't the only bets I took.

NASH
You find the Fountain of Youth or something?

MR. CUTTER
No, nothing so fantastic as that. My father was a mechanic. I understand that upkeep is important, and I found people who had some very bold ideas about how to... tune up the human body, as it were. I funded their work, and provided them a willing test subject.

BEAT.

NASH
Why play it this way? Why go back to Goddard? I mean, you literally could've done anything else.

MR. CUTTER
Well, one: revenge is fun. Two: why go through the trouble of building a vast conglomerate with an world famous reputation and almost a century of government contracts when you can just steal one? And three: as much as I've always been excited by space exploration and the possibility of what we could find out in the universe... it's only one part of the bigger picture.

NASH
What does that picture look like?

MR. CUTTER
Like progress, Andrea. I wasn't kidding before. I really am working for a better future. For all of us.

BEAT.

NASH
Thank you for telling me.

MR. CUTTER
You're one of a handful of people in the world that knows. For now, I suppose.

NASH
I don't see any reason why that club has to get bigger.

MR. CUTTER
What do you mean?

NASH
I mean, you don't really believe I'm going to publish any of this, do you?

Cutter raises an eyebrow ever so slightly.

MR. CUTTER
And in exchange?

NASH
I want in.

MR. CUTTER
In?

NASH
On what you're doing. I want in. I'll take any job you give me, but I want to be a part of what you're building.

MR. CUTTER
Why?

NASH
Because somehow you've figured out how to play the long game *and* make the changes that need to happen *now*. That's what I want to be a part of. Just give me that and all this mess can stay buried in the past where it belongs.
(BEAT)
Well?

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
No.

NASH
What?

MR. CUTTER
No. No, thank you. This isn't how I do business, Andrea. I'm not about to start now.

NASH
No. No, you wouldn't have sat here, you wouldn't have gone through all of this - you wouldn't have *told me* - if you weren't going to let me in.

MR. CUTTER
(shrugging)
It was a long flight. I needed something to do. This was better than watching Monsters Inc. for a third time

NASH
You're bluffing.

MR. CUTTER
I'm really not. You have a wonderful mind, Andrea.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
One day soon I'm sure it will be put to... more productive use. My associate will be in to take care of you shortly. But for now I'm afraid I must... *volte face*. Goodbye.

Cutter gets up, and walks to the door. Just as he OPENS IT -

NASH
Wait!
(He turns back to her)
Psi wave radiation. Those three stars you mentioned. They're all red dwarves that exhibit abnormal levels of psi wave radiation.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
And?

NASH
(mind going so fast)
And... that's interesting... be-because...
(ah-ha)
Because, like you said, we're what's next. People. If anything holds the key to... to *engineering* a better humanity... you think it has something to do with psi-wave radiation.

BEAT.

Then, Cutter HIT A BUTTON on the wall by the door.

MR. CUTTER
David? That thing I told you to do earlier? Don't worry about it. I'm going to cancel that.

CLARKE
(over comm)
Yes, sir.

With a BUZZ, Cutter closes the intercom.

MR. CUTTER
Okay, then. Let's talk.

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE (IN FLIGHT) - ROOM TWO - 20 MINUTES LATER

Nash and Cutter are still seated opposite each other. We hear the BING-BONG of the PA from the pilot.

ENLIL
Attention, lady and gentlemen: We are now beginning our final descent into the Los Angeles area. Please keep your seat beats fastened and your tray table in the upright, locked position if you happen to have been sent to the Time Out Chair that has a seat belt and a tray table. Otherwise, just keep doing what you're doing! From the flight deck, we hope you've enjoyed your time up in the air and we hope to see you aboard again soon.

MR. CUTTER
(re: announcement)
Amazing. A piece of art every time. In any case: does what I've outlined sound acceptable?

NASH
It.. it does. Yes.

MR. CUTTER
You will have to shed your old skin, so to speak. There would certainly be questions if a journalist of the caliber of Andrea Nash were to suddenly -

NASH
Of course. I understand.

MR. CUTTER
I assume it won't be a problem for you. Any preferences on background? College degrees? Pets? Any names you have in mind?

Nash cocks her head to one side, thinking.

NASH
I don't know. I've always kind of liked the name Rachel.

MR. CUTTER
I'll pass that along.

There's a BEAT as we hear the plane TOUCHDOWN on the tarmac and its engines slow.

Nash looks out the room's window.

NASH
This... This isn't LAX.

MR. CUTTER
No. No, this little airstrip is on one of our properties. Skip the traffic when you can, right?

Nash shakes her head.

NASH
You think of everything, don't you?

MR. CUTTER
I try to. If you don't mind?

Nash CLICKS the recorder off, and hands it to Cutter.

NASH
Here you are, *sir*. I don't think I'll be needing that.

Cutter HMMS appreciatively at that, and they both look at the window at the approaching terminal.

MR. CUTTER
Well. There's the jet bridge. That's my cue. Goodbye, Ms. Nash.

One last time, Cutter gets up, OPENS the door, and WALKS OUT, leaving Nash alone in the room.

She just sits there for a moment, looking out. Then she stands up, and gazes around the empty room.

NASH
Goodbye, Ms. Nash.

As she walks out, off the plane and into the fresh air, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"BRAVE NEW WORLD"

by

Gabriel Urbina

Story by:

Sarah Shachat & Gabriel Urbina

Writer's Note: This episode takes place starting on Day 1220 of the Hephaestus Mission.

FADE IN: On HERA. Speaking directly to us.

HERA

So here's a story. Once upon a time, there lived a broken little girl. She was born with clouded eyes, and a weak heart, not destined to beat through an entire lifetime. But instead of being wretched or afraid, the little girl decided to be clever.

She got very, very good at fixing things. First she fixed toys, and clocks, and old machines that no one thought would ever run again. Then, she fixed bigger things. She fixed the cold and drafty orphanage where she grew up; when she went to school, she fixed equations to make them more useful; everything around her, she made better... and sharper... and *stronger*.

She had no friends, of course, except for the ones she made. The little girl had a talent for making dolls - beautiful, wonderful mechanical dolls - and she thought they were better friends than anyone in the world. They could be whatever she wanted them to be - and as *real* as she wanted them to be - and they never left her behind... and they never talked back... and they were never afraid of her.

Except when she wanted them to be.

But if there was one thing the girl never felt like she could fix, it was herself. Until... one day a strange thing happened. The broken girl met an old man - older than anyone she had ever met, but still tricky and clever, *almost* as clever as the girl. And he said -

MR. CUTTER

"Hello, little girl. I want you to make a doll for me."

Whoops, did we say Hera? We actually meant -

PRYCE
"And it must be your very best doll. It must look like a real person, and sound like a real person, and be a real person. Can you do this for me?"

MR. CUTTER
The girl thought for a moment. Then she said, "And if I can?"

PRYCE
The old man replied, "Then you and I will fix the world. I will be young and you will be whole and the world will finally be everything it could be. Everything it *should* be."

MR. CUTTER
And so they did. And everyone lived happily ever after, the end.
(DEEP BREATH)
It's almost time. Are you ready?

PRYCE
Yes. Let's get started.

OPENING CREDITS

INT. U.S.S. SOL - COMMON ROOM - 2000 HOURS

Data FLICKERS on a screen. Rachel stands by it, surrounded by EIFFEL, MINKOWSKI, LOVELACE, JACOBI and KEPLER.

EIFFEL
Oh my God... **That's** the evil plan?

RACHEL
That's the plan, yes.

EIFFEL
But it's... it's so **evil**! And so... **planned**!

RACHEL
Yes, thank you, Eiffel. Eloquent as always. Any questions? Lovelace?

LOVELACE
Umm... are you kidding?

RACHEL
No. Jacobi?

JACOBI
Yeah, uh, quick follow-up? *No really*: Are you kidding?

KEPLER
It's real, Jacobi. It's real and it's happening.

That hangs in the air for a BEAT. Then -

MINKOWSKI
If... that's all true... *if*... why tell us? Why now?

RACHEL
Well... you *did* ask.

KEPLER
There's no risk. It's a meaningl-

MINKOWSKI
Kepler, why are you on my ship?

KEPLER
Don't worry, Minkowski. I'm just here to collect Miss Young once she's unlocked the Sol's systems.

HERA
Colonel, you're... actually okay with this? You're going to *help*?

KEPLER
Of course I am.

EIFFEL
Ugh, gasp. All right... Litigious Barbie: before your big Show and Tell Presentation, you said we *wouldn't* go. Why?

RACHEL
Well... do you **want** to go? After everything you just heard?

For a LONG BEAT there's silence. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Miss Young, you're going to go up to the bridge, you're going to get me flight capabilities, and then you and Kepler are going to **get the hell off my boat.** Understood?

LOVELACE
Uh, should we maybe talk about -

MINKOWSKI
Is that understood?

RACHEL
Aye, aye, sir. Whatever you say.

Rachel turns and EXITS. As everyone else watches, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - ONE HOUR LATER

Rachel tinkers with the Sol's command column. Minkowski, Eiffel, Lovelace, and Jacobi all watch her.

RACHEL
(scanning her hand)
All right, just one more...

COMPUTER
Identity confirmed: Rachel Young.
System access granted.

RACHEL
Add administrative override:
Lieutenant Commander Renée
Minkowski. Full access. I'll need
your Command authentication code.

MINKOWSKI
Victor, Uniform, Lima, Charlie,
Alpha, November.

The CONSOLE HUMS steadily for a moment... then... DING!

COMPUTER
Approved. Override registered.

EIFFEL
That's it? We can go?

RACHEL
Almost. I still need to disarm the
security features in engineering.

MINKOWSKI
Mr. Jacobi? Would you mind? And
keep an eye on her.

RACHEL
Oh please. Guys, where's the trust?

MINKOWSKI
Keep a **very close** eye on her.

JACOBI
Yeah... Come on, Miss Young. Let's get this over with.

Jacobi OPENS THE DOOR to the corridor, and gestures at it.

RACHEL
Toodle-oo!

She and Jacobi exit. Minkowski turns to the controls. BEAT.

EIFFEL
I **really** don't like her.

LOVELACE
Minkowski? Can we do this? Can you fly this thing back to Earth?

MINKOWSKI
Captain, I could... Hell, I could get it to *fly itself* back to Earth. I just need two hours to set the flight plan.

HERA
And... what about the other stuff? What about Cutter's plan?

MINKOWSKI
(BEAT)
I don't know, Hera. I don't know.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, you're the one that's spent time around these alien things. Will Cutter's Crazy *actually* work?

EIFFEL
I don't know. Bob's not a pushover, but he's also got a funny way of seeing the world. So... maybe?
(BEAT)
No. It'll work. They'll do it.

HERA
So... should we do... something?

LOVELACE
Something like *what*?

HERA
There has to be *something* we can do to stop them. Cutter wouldn't *generously* give us this ship if he didn't want us far away from here.

EIFFEL
Or... I'm just gonna throw this out there: what if Scrooge McLannister is just pulling a bit of the ol' reverse psychology on us? What if he actually wants us here? Or, since it is Cutter...

LOVELACE
... what if he's got it wired both ways. Yeah.

BEAT. Everyone present hates this intensely. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
Everyone out. I've got a course to plot.

EIFFEL
Err... quoi?

MINKOWSKI
We can't stop them, can we? **Can we?** Yeah, that's what I thought. So if we can't stop them here, and we can't stop them back on Earth, I'm picking the one where we maybe get to see our families again.

EIFFEL
Umm, what if we can't, though?

LOVELACE
Maybe if we talked about it for more than -

MINKOWSKI
And then what? We can come up with another bad plan that doesn't work? And **more people can die?!**

That rings out for a BEAT. Finally -

HERA
Commander, you're not *wrong*. But -

MINKOWSKI
(back at the controls)
No, Hera. Someone has to sound the alarm on this insanity. But you want to stay here? **Fine by me.**

EIFFEL
Comman -

MINKOWSKI
You're all dismissed.

BEAT. Eiffel and Lovelace OPEN THE DOOR, and shuffle into -

INT. U.S.S. SOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lovelace SHUTS THE DOOR behind her, turns towards Eiffel.

LOVELACE
Well... that seemed *healthy*.

HERA
Just... give her some time. It's been a long... **years.**

EIFFEL
Hera... what do you think? Should we stay?

Hera makes a NOISE, equals part PENSIVE and FRUSTRATED.

HERA
I don't know. But it... doesn't feel right to not do anything.

EIFFEL
Hera, I think that out of all of us? You can *definitely* go home with your head held high.

HERA
Thank you, Officer Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Yeah, well... you're welcome.

And suddenly there's a NOISE - like a LOUD FLASH and a WOOSH combined, and it seems to ZOOM US forward and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2200 HOURS

SHWIING! A DOOR SWINGS OPEN and Officer Eiffel enters the comms room. He looks around - unsure, timid.

EIFFEL
All right, I... I *guess* this is the Comms Room I've heard so much about. Light switch, light switch... ah-ha!

He HITS A SWITCH. There's a HORRIBLE, GRINDING NOISE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa, whoa, okay, *not* the light switch. Turn off, turn off!
(FLIPS IT OFF)
Nice going, Doug: twenty-three minutes on this stupid station and you're breaking something...
(re: another switch)
All right... if it's not that one, then it's gotta be...

He FLIPS THE SECOND SWITCH. An ALARM starts to BLARE.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Ahhh! No, never mind, never mind, bad switch, bad switch, stop it!
(FLIPS IT OFF)
I'm living in a cuckoo clock.
(CLEARS THROAT)
Well, the third time's defi -

HERA
I wouldn't do that.

Eiffel FLINCHES BADLY, startled by the sudden voice.

EIFFEL
What the - Hello? Is anyone there?

HERA
Oh, very good. We're not gonna be able to get anything past you.

EIFFEL
... sure. What does that switch - ?

HERA
That one releases the nerve gas, so I'm *guessing* you want to leave it alone. Or should I release the -

EIFFEL
No. No thanks. Why would there be -? Look, is there any way to turn on the lights?

HERA
You *could* ask...

EIFFEL
Oh. Could you turn on the lights, please?

Instantly, we hear the LIGHTS IN THE ROOM TURNING ON.

HERA
Good boy.

EIFFEL
Umm, yeah. Thanks...

HERA
Is something wrong?

EIFFEL
No it's just... where are you? And also... *who* are you?

HERA
I'm guessing you didn't read your dossier too closely, did you?

EIFFEL
Hmm? Oh, no, no, I... *definitely* read it. But... in the spirit of conversation, you *could* repeat whatever's in there that -

HERA
I'm Sensus Unit #214. You can call me Hera.

EIFFEL
But... where are you?

HERA
Everywhere. My consciousness extends all over the station.

EIFFEL
And you can see me?

HERA
Yep. Overhead cameras there - and there. You've got a lovely ultraviolet halo around your head.

EIFFEL
Ultra... suuure. Whatever you say. Also, uh, sorry, I'm -

HERA
Officer Douglas Eiffel, Goddard Employee ID #68152. You're in charge of communications and reconnaissance, and you have two packs of contraband cigarettes floating out of your pocket.

EIFFEL
Oh, jeez! I mean, I can *explain* -

HERA
Explain what, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL
Oh, well... thank you. Hera?

HERA
Hera. Yes. And if you need any more help with light switches, just ***ask***, okay? I'm here to help.

EIFFEL
Sure. Sure thing. It's, uh, good to know you're around, Hera.

And with another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH, we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - ENGINEERING - 2130 HOURS **(PRESENT)**

Jacobi leads Rachel through engineering to a console.

JACOBI
That's the one you need?

RACHEL
Yep. That's the one.

JACOBI
Great. Get cracking.

We hear Rachel TINKERING. Someone CLEARS THEIR THROAT.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Oh. What do **you** want?

KEPLER
Jacobi. You okay?

JACOBI
What, is the guy who got **shot** doing all right? Yeah, fine.

RACHEL
Actually, he refused to take the medbay's sedative agent, so he's in quite a lot of pain.
(off Jacobi's look)
Sorry. Back to work...

KEPLER
Thank you. For making the shot. And saving our lives. Are you sure you're - ?

JACOBI
I'm sorry, but... what is this? What the hell are you doing?

KEPLER
What am - I'm *concerned* about -

JACOBI
Oh, you're **concerned**? Where was your concern for the two weeks you let your bosses use me like a wind-up monkey?

KEPLER
Oh, what was I supposed to do?

JACOBI
How about a little bit of ANYTHING?

KEPLER
And what? Get myself shot? Get *you* shot? No. I played the game. I kept my eye on the bigger -

JACOBI
No. No. That's the lie you tell yourself. The *truth...* is that you were *afraid*. And the only thing you *did* was try to save *your* hide.

There's a TENSE BEAT. Kepler and Jacobi both stare at each.

RACHEL
Well... you're not wrong.

JACOBI
Which one?

KEPLER
Which one?

RACHEL
Both of you. Now keep it down. *Some of us* are trying to work.

As Kepler and Jacobi turn away from each other, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - COMMON ROOM - MEANWHILE

A DOOR SWINGS OPEN. Eiffel enters, looks around and finds -

EIFFEL
Captain?

LOVELACE
Hey Eiffel.

EIFFEL
What are you...? Did one of the fridges break?

LOVELACE
No, I'm just indulging in some momentary weakness.
(takes a bite)
Hardest part of being Cutter's houseguest? Not taking his food bribes. Because honestly?

EIFFEL
It all looked really delicious?

LOVELACE
Christ, yeah. Here grab a fork.

EIFFEL
(sitting down)
All right, what have we got?

LOVELACE
The chocolate terrine's **amazing.** Caviar if you're feeling *fancy*.

EIFFEL
Any ice cream?

LOVELACE
Freezer. I also found the drinks cabinet. You want a glass of wine?

BEAT.

EIFFEL
More than anything, Captain. More than anything. But no.

LOVELACE
Sorry. I forgot.

EIFFEL
It's all right.
(BEAT)
Hey, I never did get you that chai latte...

LOVELACE
Don't even *joke* about that.

He CHUCKLES SOFTLY. Then -

EIFFEL
I... uh, I also never thanked you.

LOVELACE
Eiffel, there's **so much** you could be talking about right now.

EIFFEL
Well, that's true. But... *specifically*, thank you for talking to me. For helping me see the stuff I was getting wrong. It's not something you should've had to do, but... Thanks for doing it.

LOVELACE
You're welcome.

They're silent for ANOTHER BEAT. Then -

EIFFEL
This is... this is really good.

LOVELACE
Cutter spared no expense. Beats the hell out of... What was it? "Seaweed tea?"

EIFFEL
(chuckling)
In lukewarm water, yeah. I'm... I'm glad you're here, Captain.

LOVELACE
You too, Eiffel.

And as they continue eating their mountain of food, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Minkowski TYPES into the console. There's a CHIRP.

HERA
Is... is that it?

MINKOWSKI
That's it. I press that green button, and this ship will fly to Earth, pretty much on its own.

HERA
That's... that's great, Commander.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI
Hera, I should have asked earlier. But... a few months ago, when we were voting... you said there wasn't much for you back on Earth. Are you going to be okay?

HERA
Thank you, Commander. I don't know that it'll be easy, but most of the *worst* people are here now. Maybe Earth won't be so bad. For a while.
(BEAT)
What about you, Commander? You said that... well, after everything that happened, you couldn't just go back. Not until you felt you'd done something to make it better. Are you ready to go home now?

BEAT. Then, Minkowski buries her face in her hands.

MINKOWSKI
Oh damn every single thing to Hell... Hera, get me everyone. Now.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - HANGAR BAY - MEANWHILE

Rachel and Kepler are making their way towards the airlock.

RACHEL
All systems should be operational now, and they've been keyed to Minkowski's credentials.

JACOBI
Great. Door's right there.

KEPLER
Jacobi, you -

JACOBI
Do let it hit you on the way out.

BEAT. Then, an ALARM BLARES through the P.A. system.

HERA
Attention, all personnel: please report to the hangar bay.

KEPLER
I think that's our cue.

RACHEL
Agreed.

But at that moment, a DOOR behind Jacobi SWINGS OPEN.

MINKOWSKI
Stop. You're not going anywhere.

RACHEL
Anything we can do for you, Lieu-

MINKOWSKI
Shut up. Hera, where are Lovelace and - ?

EIFFEL
(entering)
We're here. What's going on?

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH aaaand...

MINKOWSKI
I'm not going anywhere.
(off their reactions:)
Settle down. I don't know if Cutter wants us here or if he wants us gone. And I don't care. What I know is that I can't let him and Pryce try to destroy an entire species. So I'm going to *try* to stop this. No one has to do this with me. Because let's be clear: I don't know that we can even be a **speed bump** to them. So only stay if... if you have to.
(BEAT)
These people have taken our lives away from us. I'm not going to Earth until I've taken mine back from them.

BEAT. Finally - Lovelace steps forward.

LOVELACE
There's the Minkowski I've been waiting on.

EIFFEL
I *knew* she was in there somewhere. Hera, what'd you say to her?

HERA
Oh, just a couple of things a friend once said to me.

MINKOWSKI
Are you sure about this? I can't promise it's going to work.

JACOBI
Hell, I've still got a few tricks up my sleeve. Might surprise them.

KEPLER
Jacobi, don't. This is *stupid*.

JACOBI
Yeah, well... I'm starting to think these guys are *my kind of stupid.*

Rachel SNORTS, deeply amused.

RACHEL
Well isn't this *darling*? You're all going to be the most **adorable** corpses going out the air-

LOVELACE
Okay, is there a reason why we haven't shot these two yet?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, and here it is: come with us.
(off Rachel's SNORT:)
No, really: **come with us.** I don't know how what Cutter and Pryce are doing started to make sense to you, but... you're still people. And that means you're still on our side, even if you don't think you are.
(BEAT)
Colonel, you said you might be wrong about other things.

BEAT. Everyone stares at Kepler, willing him to -

KEPLER
Let's go, Miss Young.

RACHEL
Have fun storming the castle!

There's various EXASPERATED EXHALES, DISGUSTED GROANS, and -

JACOBI
Hey! HEY!

Jacobi runs in front of Kepler and Rachel.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
I said: **HEY!** Really? **REALLY?!** Are you just physically incapable of admitting that you got it wrong? You know, <u>you're allowed</u> to make mistakes, as long as at some point you **admit they're mistakes!** It's super easy! Repeat after me: I was WRONG!
(lower, softer)
I was wrong, and people died. And the only thing I can do is not be wrong again.

He's almost shaking. Kepler and Rachel both stare at him.

RACHEL
You knew what you were getting yourself into.

JACOBI
No, I didn't. I didn't know I was getting into mind control. I didn't know I was getting into reducing people to nothing! There is a line. And you're almost out of chances to get on the right side of it. *Please*. Stay. Fight this.

RACHEL
You done?
(he is)
Okay. There is no line, Mr. Jacobi. Forwards. Always forwards. Goodbye.

And with a slightest hint of a jaunty hum, Rachel exits.

JACOBI
Don't do this, Colonel.

BEAT. Then, Kepler EXHALES.

KEPLER
Thank you, Daniel. And goodbye.

Kepler EXITS. For a BEAT everyone watches, disappointed.

LOVELACE
... well, there goes the element of surprise.

JACOBI
No... No, they won't see this coming. We're not going to slow them down. We're not going to hold our own. We're going to **crush** them.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - TECH ROOM - HALF AN HOUR LATER

TCHHH! TCHHH! Jacobi makes adjustments to a tech panel.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi... are you *sure* you know what you're doing?

JACOBI
Yep. Hera, how's that? Does it feel like we're on the right track?

HERA
I think so.

MINKOWSKI
And what track is that, exactly?

JACOBI
Old idea of Alana's. To, you know, horribly over-generalize, we're gonna lock all of Hera's decision-making pathways by putting her system into overdrive.

HERA
I won't be able to receive new directives from anyone, not even Doctor Pryce.

MINKOWSKI
And how long is that going to last?

HERA
... an hour? Maybe two? Sooner or later my processor <u>will</u> give out. I'll need a full reboot. But I think it's worth the risk.

JACOBI
Hera? Can you play the next tape?

There's a CRRSSSHHH! as a recording engages:

MAXWELL
(on tape)
Experimental log #R62. Overclocking A.I. Central Processor. Increase voltage range...

The tape continues for a moment Jacobi works. Then -

JACOBI
Got it. Thanks, Hera.

HERA
She was... she really was something special wasn't she?

JACOBI
Alana? Yeah. She was the best.

KEPLER (V.O.)
(ghostly, distant)
Jacobi? Jacobi?

There's a the same TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH! we hear before, we -

CUT TO:

INT. GODDARD FUTURISTICS H.Q. - 1300 HOURS (**FLASHBACK**)

A bustling office. A distracted Jacobi faces a window.

KEPLER
Jacobi! Anybody home?!

JACOBI
Ye-yes! Sir. What can I do for you?

KEPLER
Come this way.

He leads Jacobi through a door, where they find -

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Jacobi - Doctor Alana Maxwell.

MAXWELL
Oh, hi! Uh, charmed to, I mean, pleasure - it's <u>nice</u> to meet you.

JACOBI
Yes. You too. All those things.

KEPLER
Maxwell's our newest SI-5 recruit.
(off his PHONE BEEPING:)
Oh. Excuse me for one moment.

A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES as Kepler leaves.

JACOBI
So what do you do?

MAXWELL
Oh, I - I do computational thought experiments and hyper-conductive artificial nervous design.

BEAT. Then Jacobi leans a bit closer, conspiratorially.

JACOBI
I'm going to ask you that again, and we're gonna try it one more time, okay?
(clears his throat)
So, Alana Maxwell, what do you do?

MAXWELL
I do cool stuff with robots. You?

JACOBI
I make very big things blow up.
(shakes her hand)
Pleasure. How's Kepler treating you so far?

MAXWELL
Oh, he's a...

JACOBI
A lot? You'll get used to him.

MAXWELL
Any pro tips? Do's or don't-do's?

JACOBI
Oh... **lots**. But really, it all comes down to this: you're here, that means you're one of the best. That you're gonna do great things.

MAXWELL
That's... really nice of you.

JACOBI
Yep. And it's the last nice thing you'll ever hear from me.

MAXWELL
What?

JACOBI
Yeah, sorry. Limited time offer, I'm afraid. But if you need anything, I got your back.

MAXWELL
Is that another limited time offer, or...

JACOBI
No, no. No matter what happens, I've got your back.

MAXWELL
Great. I will take you up on that.

WOOSH! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - BRIDGE - 2300 HOURS (**PRESENT**)

A DOOR SLIDES OPEN, revealing Kepler and Rachel.

MR. CUTTER
Ahhh, Rachel, Warren. Welcome back.

RACHEL
Thank you, sir.

MR. CUTTER
How are our friends? Are they going to do the smart thing?

KEPLER
It doesn't look that way, sir.

A BEAT as Cutter takes that in. HE SIGHS.

MR. CUTTER
Well... if they want to spend their last few hours feeling heroic, who are we to deny them an agonizing death? Rachel, I trust you took care of the other little detail?

RACHEL
Yes, sir. When the medbay extracted the bullet from Jacobi's leg, it inserted a tracker and transmitter. Stream's on channel four.

MR. CUTTER
Excellent work. Big smiles, everyone. Today's the day...

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - CORRIDOR - MEANWHILE

Lovelace and Minkowski walk down a corridor.

LOVELACE
We're about ready. I've moved some hardware back to the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
What about Jacobi?

Around here we start to hear a sound...

LOVELACE
Already on structure. He's transferring Hera back to - Are you hearing - What is that?

They've arrived at a closed door. Through it they hear -

EIFFEL
I don't know what's gonna happen, but... we're gonna give it a shot.

Minkowski and Lovelace frown, leaning closer to the door.

MINKOWSKI
Is... Eiffel making a log?

EIFFEL
Look, I... I never got a chance to say I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. And...
(BEAT)
Your dad loves you. Your dad loves you *so much*.

Lovelace and Minkowski both EXHALE. *That's* what this is.

MINKOWSKI
... Captain? Go help Jacobi. I'll get Eiffel, be right with you.

LOVELACE
Okay.

With that Lovelace moves off.

EIFFEL
Don't let anybody tell you that you can't do something. **Ever.** You're going to go so, **so** far. I know it. I wish I could be there to see it. I just... I love you, Anne. Always and forever.

A BEEP as he turns off the recorder. Minkowski SIGHS. Then - KNOCK, KNOCK. A moment later, the DOOR OPENS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Hey! Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel. Come on. It's time to go.

EIFFEL
Ah. Sure. Just... uh, any chance we have time for me to swing by the ship's comms room?

MINKOWSKI
... yeah. We have time.

EIFFEL
Great. Thanks, Commander.

As they move off, we -

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - DOCKING BAY - 15 MINUTES LATER

Minkowski, waiting. She SIGHS. A moment later, a DOOR OPENS. Eiffel enters and they start towards the airlock.

EIFFEL
Cool - all set. Thank you for the patience, Commander. Let's blow this popsicle stand.

MINKOWSKI
Sure thing, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
Commander? You hanging in there?

MINKOWSKI
Oh just... I'm fine. Fine.

EIFFEL
Hey - chin up, soldier. We're almost through. Just one more day, and then we're done.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, one more day.
(more to herself)
The time is now, the place is here -

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
- one day more.

EIFFEL
- one day more.

They both stop, dead in their tracks.

MINKOWSKI
Did you just - ?

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Was that what I - ?

They look at each other: *No way*. And BURST INTO LAUGHTER.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Man... this is really it, huh? The end of everything.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah.
(BEAT)
Eiffel, umm, I just realized... I left the relay stabilizer in the bridge. Any chance you could - ?

EIFFEL
Say no more, mein kommandant. One relay stabilizer coming right up.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you.

Eiffel turns around, and STEPS further into the Sol. Minkowski takes another STEP, into the airlock proper.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
(low, to herself)
Now crossing the Sol-Hephaestus boundary...

She presses a SWITCH, turning on the COMMS with a BUZZER.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Hera? Are you transferred back?

HERA
Yes, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
Can you connect me to the Sol flight deck?

HERA
... sure? Just a moment.

There's a BLIP from the radio console.

MINKOWSKI
Initiate flight path A-1. Authorization: Victor, Uniform, Lima, Charlie, Alpha, November.

For just a second, there's SILENCE - And then PANDEMONIUM BREAKS OUT. BWWWAAAA! A DEFEANING KLAXON BLARES.

EIFFEL
What the... ? What the hell?!

A BLAST DOOR DESCENDS, separating him from Minkowski!

Minkowski takes a BREATH, steeling herself. A second later there's an URGENT KNOCK on the AIRLOCK WINDOW.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Commander! Can you hear me? Something's wrong!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, Eiffel, I can - There's nothing wrong.

EIFFEL
What? Yes, there is! I don't know -

COMPUTER
Sol Flight System Engaged. Launch in T-Minus sixty seconds.

EIFFEL
What the hell is it - ?
(click)
... no. No, no, no, nonono... you didn't. You did **not**...

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry Eiffel. You're going home.

Around them, we hear the SOL POWERING UP...

EIFFEL
Not without you! Let me in -

MINKOWSKI
Listen to -

EIFFEL
If you don't open this door -

MINKOWSKI
LISTEN TO ME!
(steadier)
I need to know that at least one of us makes it back. That I got *someone* through this.

EIFFEL
No, you can't - you have no right!
I'm not leaving you behind!

MINKOWSKI
Go home, Eiffel. Hug your daughter.

EIFFEL
Minkowski, **open this door**!
Goddammit, Renée, DON'T DO THIS!

MINKOWSKI
Goodbye, Doug.

There's an ALMIGHTY HISS as the ships decouple, and a ROAR as the Sol launches AWAY FROM THE HEPHAESTUS.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Cutter, Riemann, Rachel, and Kepler. All look out the window, at the receding figure of the Sol.

MR. CUTTER
There goes my ship after all.
Hmm... Decoy? Trap?

RIEMANN
No, sir. Scans are picking up life signs. Someone's on that thing.

RACHEL
But... Mr. Jacobi's tracker is registering him on the Hephaestus.

MR. CUTTER
Oooh! Dissent among the ranks.
Warren. Were you a betting man...
Who's leaving the party early?

KEPLER
Hmm... Eiffel, sir. He has regularly tried to avoid confrontation with enemy forces, and he has the most active connections to Earth.

MR. CUTTER
Well... one down, I suppose.

And off of that ominous note, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

The SHIP SHAKES BADLY as it JETS THROUGH SPACE. After a moment the DOOR FLIES OPEN, and in tumbles -

EIFFEL
Goddammit, goddammit... I am... so sick... of this happening!

He arrives at the console, FURIOUSLY TYPING SOME COMMANDS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay, okay - how the hell do I turn this thing around? Let's see maybe - AH-HA! Access navigation system!

He HITS A KEY. Instantly, there's an ANGRY BUZZ: *denied*.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
No, no, don't tell me access denied! I need to - !

COMPUTER
Must verify command identity.

EIFFEL
No, you stupid piece of R2-D2 wannabe - she unlocked the systems! She was putting in a... a...
(snaps fingers)
- administrative override! Access administrative override.

COMPUTER
Administrative access requires personnel verification.

EIFFEL
Communications Officer Douglas F. Eiffel! And the F. stands for, "FOR GOD'S SAKE, SHUT UP AND LET ME CHANGE THE FLIGHT PLAN!"

There's another ANGRY BUZZER from the console.

COMPUTER
Administrative override is limited to Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski. System access denied.

EIFFEL
Oh, you've gotta be... she only authorized Minkowski?!

COMPUTER
Would you like to try again?

EIFFEL
Goddammit, Minkowski...

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - TECH STATION - MEANWHILE

A DOOR OPENS as Minkowski enters. She finds Jacobi and Lovelace wrapping up some final adjustments to a tech panel.

LOVELACE
Minkowski, there you are.

MINKOWSKI
How are the preparations going?

JACOBI
Oh, fine, fine. What was that racket a moment ago?

MINKOWSKI
That was - it doesn't matter what it was. Any trouble getting Hera back online?

HERA
No. I'm back in control. And already missing the extra processing power...

JACOBI
Which means I get to ask, more pointedly and impatiently: *what was that racket back there?*

MINKOWSKI
(BEAT)
That was the Sol. Taking off.

JACOBI
What? Why in the name of - wait a minute... where's Eiffel?

Minkowski meets his gaze. Dead calm.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel's not coming with us.

HERA
I'm sorry?

MINKOWSKI
If - <u>if</u> - we don't make it through this... if we don't stop this... people need to know what's coming. They need to know what's happened.

JACOBI
And did you tell him that *before* or *after* you sent him on his merry?

MINKOWSKI
This is best for everyone - including Eiffel.

HERA
You... you could have given us a chance. To say goodbye.

That rings out for a BEAT. Finally -

LOVELACE
Mr. Jacobi, Hera: that's enough.

We hear Jacobi EXHALE, forcing himself to steadiness.

HERA
Yes, I'm - you're right, Captain. I'm sorry, Commander.

MINKOWSKI
It's all right. Do we have a plan?

Lovelace FLIPS OPEN a NOTEBOOK, and CLICKS ON A PEN.

LOVELACE
(starting to scribble)
Do we ever. Gather around, kids.

MINKOWSKI
Am I going to like this?

HERA
Well, it's very... <u>us</u>.

MINKOWSKI
So... reckless, dangerous, and practically guaranteed to fail?

HERA
Would you have it any other way, Commander?

MINKOWSKI
Not in a million years, Hera. Not in a million years.

There's another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH!, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS - HANGAR BAY - 1800 HOURS **(FLASHBACK)**

There's a KLAXON, then the AIRLOCK DOOR OPENS. After a moment, a solitary figure steps inside. She takes in the space around her, let's out a SMALL BREATH: *wow*.

MINKOWSKI
Wow... I'm here. I'm *really* here!

She LAUGHS, spins around, taking in the space, loving it.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
ATTEEEENTION! Crew of the U.S.S. Hephaestus: this is your Commanding Officer, Commander Renée Minkowski. We're going to run a good, tight ship, are we clear?
(BEAT)
I said - are we clear?
(just one more time:)
I can't hear you! I said, **are we clear**?

And instantly, booming through the P.A. speakers:

HERA
Sir, yes, sir!

MINKOWSKI
Ahh! Oh my - what the - ?

HERA
Sorry, sorry! I just - I didn't know if that was at me, or just - you know... you doing a -

MINKOWSKI
It's fine.

HERA
Really? Because I didn't mean to -

MINKOWSKI
I said it's **fine. Really.** Now, umm, excuse me, but - oh. Right. You must be the Sensus Unit.

HERA
That's right.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, they, uh, briefed me about you. I just... Unit 214, I presume?

HERA
Oh, no, no. Hera. Definitely Hera.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, sorry. I'd heard Sensus Units prefer to go by their serial -

HERA
Some do. I don't. If that's all right, Commander? It... *is* Commander Minkowski, right? I gathered as much from -

MINKOWSKI
Yes, yes, thank you. And that's right. Commander Minkowski will do.

HERA
Well, *Commander*, welcome to the U.S.S. Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI
Thank you. I think my first official command directive will be that we never speak about this conversation to anyone. Ever.

HERA
What conversation?

MINKOWSKI
Very good... *Hera*.

HERA
Sir? I thought there would be more crew personnel.

MINKOWSKI
They're still in the transport. I haven't taken them out of cryo yet, I... I wanted to... take a moment by myself. With my station.

HERA
Oh. Well, there's still some time before we have to send the transport back. Would you like me to show you around *your* station?

MINKWOSKI
I... I'd like that very much.

HERA
Step right this way.

A DOOR SWINGS OPEN by itself. And as Minkowski follows Hera's lead there's another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS - MESS HALL - 2350 HOURS **(PRESENT)**

Cutter floats before the room's piano. He plays a simplified piano arrangement of **Tchaikovsky's Symphonic Fantasia.**

RIEMANN
(entering)
Sir.

MR. CUTTER
Just a moment, Victor. Beautiful, isn't it?

RIEMANN
Of... course, sir. You're playing wonderfully.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I'm not doing it justice. You really need a full ensemble for this piece. This is actually based on a Shakespeare play. Care to guess which one?

RIEMANN
Can I have a clue?

MR. CUTTER
"Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not?"

RIEMANN
So... Romeo and - ?

PRYCE
(emerging from the shadows)
The Tempest, Mr. Riemann. Do read a book sometime. Marcus, is this really the best use of our time?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, something came over me. After all... a storm *is* coming. And on the other side of it...

PRYCE
"Oh, brave new world..."

MR. CUTTER
"... that has such people in it."
(stops playing)
Are we ready?

PRYCE
Oh yes. The device is at full functionality. We just need to arrange matters on the other side.

MR. CUTTER
Well that shouldn't take long, provided we don't run into any -

RACHEL
(entering)
Sir, we've got a - Oh.

MR. CUTTER
... complications. Impeccable timing as always. Is there a problem?

KEPLER
A situation, sir. It seems that our guests are mobilizing against us.

MR. CUTTER
And how have they decided to throw away their lives?

KEPLER
A full frontal assault, sir. To destroy the device.

MR. CUTTER
Ooooh, fun.

RACHEL
Y-yes, sir... Umm, we also picked up some chatter on their weaponry supplies... Firearms, explosives, something about a *harpoon*...

MR. CUTTER
Victor?

RIEMANN
I'll handle it. Full liberties?

MR. CUTTER
Yes. It's time to wrap up these loose threads. Everyone else? Places please... places for the top of the show.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Eiffel paces in front of the Sol's flight computer.

EIFFEL
Stupid ship... stupid protocols... stupid Minkowski...
(in his awful Minkowski impression)
"Sorry, Eiffel, but my final act of being a pain in your ass is to send you back home, so you always feel like you never had quite as much chest hair as Lieutenant Commander Renée Mink...
(idea)
... ow... ski...

He turns back towards the computer, mental gears turning.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Well... I've had worse ideas.
(CLEARS HIS THROAT, as Minkowski:)
Computer. Access the flight navigation system.

COMPUTER
Must verify com -

EIFFEL
Administrative override.

COMPUTER
Access requires personnel verification. Confirm identity.

EIFFEL
Umm... yes, this is Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski. I'm... uh... well I <u>sure</u> love schedules, and, uh, musicals. And that man, who I married, who, now that I think about it... I should have been given crap about when I was launching my comms officer into -

COMPUTER
Please state your command authentication code.

EIFFEL
(BEAT)
Oh. That. Um, I'm gonna go with... one... two... three, four, five?

There's a BUZZER from the console.

COMPUTER
Access denied. You have two attempts remaining before the system locks. Would you like to try again?

Eiffel EXHALES, EXASPERATED. And we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - CORRIDOR - MEANWHILE

Riemann arrives at a door and CLICKS ON his portable COMMS.

RIEMANN
All right... in position. Can you confirm their location?

RACHEL (OVER COMMS)
Affirmative, Victor. They're right behind the door.

Riemann produces a HANDGUN. COCKS IT. And then he KICKS the DOOR, making it fly open as he launches himself into -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RIEMANN
All right, turn around and -

He's interrupted by PARTY POPPERS! CONFETTI FALLS ON TOP OF HIM, as an up-beat FANFARE plays on the room's speakers.

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
What... in... the world...?

JACOBI
No, no, no, no! What are you doing here?! You're gonna ruin everything!

RIEMANN
What the - the hell are you doing?

JACOBI
What am *I* doing? What does it look like I'm doing, *Vic*? I'm planning the rockingest, swingingest, most awesome-sauce surprise party ever!

He punctuates his point by BLOWING on a PARTY HORN.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Which is now ruined, thank you very much! You have any idea how long it's gonna take me to -

Riemann COCKS HIS GUN AGAIN.

RIEMANN
Where are Minkowski and Lovelace?

JACOBI
I don't know. Where do *you* think they are?

RIEMANN
Lovelace said -

JACOBI
- that they'd be with me, when we came to take out the evil machine that *HEY! Wait a minute*! Were you listening in on us? Perhaps with some sort of biotracker device?

RIEMANN
You knew?

JACOBI
You know, I've got this friend, and she basically invented being paranoid on this station.

He HOLDS UP a NOTEBOOK, CRACKS IT OPEN. CLEARS HIS THROAT.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
"We should assume that everything we say is compromised, here's what we're actually going to-" blah, blah, blah.
(BEAT)
Awww, your little face. Oh, well, what can I say? Other than, of course...
(blows the PARTY HORN)
... <u>surprise</u>.

Riemann stares at him for a moment. And then -

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Riemann's just unloaded his entire clip at Jacobi!

He turns to leave - grabs the door handle - turns it - and the DOOR DOES NOT OPEN.

RIEMANN
What the...

He tries again: no luck. Behind him -

JACOBI
(straightening up)
Ooooooowwww! What the hell, dude?! Do you have any idea how hard it is to get a good kevlar vest? Minkowski's going to *kill* me if you just dented hers.

RIEMANN
What did you do to the door?

JACOBI
Oh, you like that? Yeah, password-locked all the doors in and out of here. You're not going anywhere, bro. We gonna party all night long.

Riemann considers him for a moment, then -

RIEMANN
Fine.
(CRACKS HIS KNUCKLES)
(MORE)

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
Just tell me this, before I kick your ass: what are Minkowski and Lovelace *actually* doing?

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - ENGINEERING - MEANWHILE

The steady HUM of the engine, turning with regular momentum. In a corner, we find Minkowski and Lovelace, working over -

LOVELACE
Here we are: starboard engine coil compressor.

MINKOWSKI
And we're sure this is gonna work?

LOVELACE
We've only got one of these, remember? Which is why we can either have the Hephaestus's engine or the Urania's engine running, but not both.

MINKWOSKI
So we take it out of this engine, stick it in the Urania's, get the hell out of here...

LOVELACE
And our good friends gravity, fire, and plasma do the rest. Bye-bye Pryce, Cutter, and all 1001 of their evil plans.

MINKOWSKI
Only thing I don't like is that we won't see the look on their faces.

LOVELACE
Oh, this is *way* less Monte Cristo than I would like it to be. But for once in our friggin' lives we're gonna be *smart* about this.

MINKOWSKI
All right, ready? Three, two, one -

They GRUNT as they pull the piece free. It comes loose with a CLANK! The engine RUMBLES, SLOWS, and GRINDS TO A HALT.

LOVELACE
I think that did it. We should be on our way to the Red Line.

Minkowski grabs the regulator, and they're on their way. After a moment - Minkowski CHUCKLES.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
What?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, just... The Hephaestus has almost fallen out of the sky so many times. It's hard to believe this is actually happening.

LOVELACE
Honestly? It's time. There's *way* too many ghosts in this place.

They've reached a door, which they PUSH OPEN. And as they do, there's another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH!, we -

CUT TO:

INT. GODDARD H.Q. - LABORATORY - 1400 HOURS **(FLASHBACK)**

A DOOR OPENS. Lovelace enters. Spots another person, doing some work. She stops just a few feet away from them.

LOVELACE
Hi. How you doing?
(BEAT: no answer)
So... we had a date today. One which I can't help but notice you kinda sorta maybe *totally blew off.*
(BEAT: nada)
I might take that sort of thing personally, were I any less <u>fabulous</u> than I am.
(BEAT: zilch)
It really makes you wonder what kind of person -

HILBERT
(annoyed GROWL)
You are not going to leave me alone until I say something, are you?

LOVELACE
Bingo.

HILBERT
And is there no chance of perhaps some kind of bribe to avoid the -

LOVELACE
Nope. Come on.

HILBERT
This is not - meeting today was entirely superfluous.

LOVELACE
It was for you to meet *the crew*. You know, of the *space station*? Where we're going to be for *two years*? Any of this ringing a bell?

HILBERT
I am familiar with particulars.

LOVELACE
And yet you keep not showing up so we can get familiar with, you know, *your* particulars. Everything I know about you's from a file. I had to get your office number from H.R.!

HILBERT
And they gave it to you?
(lower)
Will need to have them killed.

LOVELACE
Doctor -

HILBERT
Captain -

LOVELACE
Uh-uh. <u>Isabel</u>.

HILBERT
Protocols dictate -

LOVELACE
Not yet they don't. I've got two months of orientation before you get to hide behind "yes, sir"s, and I want to know who's on my crew.

Hilbert EXHALES, frustrated.

HILBERT
It is... I have been on two previous missions... sir. In my experience, it is... prudent to keep things... formal, if you understand. Do you understand?

LOVELACE
Yeah.

HILBERT
Then we have understanding?

LOVELACE
(laughs: nice try)
Uhh... no.

HILBERT
But -

LOVELACE
I respect the experience you have, and I'm probably going to ask you for a lot of help. But I'm not getting on a space station with someone unless I know what makes them tick. So you're going to have lunch with me tomorrow, and we're going to get to know each other. And if you need that to be a formal order, it can be.

BEAT.

HILBERT
Twenty minutes.

LOVELACE
Forty-five.

HILBERT
Thirty.

LOVELACE
And I get to bring Hui and Fourier.

HILBERT
Ughhh... *fine*.

She smiles - and holds out her hand.

LOVELACE
Isabel Lovelace. Nice to meet you.

HILBERT
Doctor Elias Selberg. Pleasure.

She nods at him, cheery, and heads out.

HILBERT (CONT'D)
(calling after her)
I am never going to be rid of you, am I?

LOVELACE
(not looking back)
Nope! See you tomorrow!

And as she exits, there's another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. SOL - BRIDGE - 2350 HOURS **(PRESENT)**

An ANGRY BUZZER from the console.

COMPUTER
Access denied. You have one attempt remaining before the system locks. Would you like to try again?

EIFFEL
Come on, Doug. You know this... you have to know this... What is the Command authentication code?
(BEAT; tired, done:)
Oh, who am I kidding? It's a piece of military protocol. You couldn't remember one if your life depended on it.
(rueful chuckle)
Or if *everyone's* life depended on it. Nice going, Dougie-boy...
(BEAT)
And that's why you're here. Because you could never get it right. Not when it counted.

He slumps, the last bit of fight going out of him.

And then... a SOFT WOOSH. A figure is next to him.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... get up. Get up and do it right already.

EIFFEL
I can't.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, you can.

EIFFEL
No. I can't do this. Not on my own.

MINKOWSKI
C'mon. You know this. You've heard me say it a million times.

EIFFEL
I've heard you say that I can't do my job a million times. That I'm not smart enough, not military enough, not... *you* enough!

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel... right now the only person saying that... is <u>you</u>.
(BEAT)
Let it go. Let it all go.

And something clicks. He takes a BREATH... and he gets up.

EIFFEL
(simple, confident)
Computer - access navigation system. Now.

COMPUTER
Must veri -

EIFFEL
Administrative override.

COMPUTER
Confirm identity.

EIFFEL
Lieutenant Commander Renée Minkowski.

COMPUTER
Please state your command authentication code.

BEAT. Moment of truth. Eiffel takes a DEEP BREATH, aaand...

EIFFEL
Command authentication code: Victor, Uniform, Lima, Charlie, Alpha, November. **Vulcan.**

A BEAT. The console THRUMS. Finally -

COMPUTER
Identity confirmed. All systems at your command, Commander Minkowski.

Eiffel BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF. Then, back to business:

EIFFEL
Access navigation. New flight path: return to origin point. **Turn this ship around... <u>right the hell now</u>.**

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 2359 HOURS

Cutter, Pryce, Rachel, and Kepler. In front of Cutter, prominently displayed, is a microphone-like implement. An ALARM is going off from one of the computers.

RACHEL
Sensors indicate the starboard engine has completely stopped.

MR. CUTTER
Hmm... impressive.

PRYCE
That's all you have to say?

MR. CUTTER
Would you relax? Our orbit is stable enough. We have time.

There's a BEEPING sound from another one of the consoles.

KEPLER
Midnight, sir.

MR. CUTTER
The very witching hour. Time to change the world.

Pryce presses a button. We hear a MACHINE TURNING ON - a *massive* machine, located in another room of the station.

PRYCE
Device is running, Marcus. Whenever you're ready.

MR. CUTTER
Rachel? Could I get... ninety seconds on the counter?

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

MR. CUTTER
And... execute.

Rachel PRESSES A BUTTON. A COUNTDOWN BEGINS.

RACHEL
Done, sir.

Cutter steps up to the device, and when he speaks, his voice has an otherworldly, reverberating quality to it.

MR. CUTTER
Good evening. My name is Marcus Cutter. I am here to make a deal.
(BEAT)
Rest assured, I **know** that you are listening. We know enough about your technology to break through some of the... language barriers. As one representative to another, I ask that you manifest yourself here. In a form we can understand.

PAUSE. The digital counter runs: BEEP... BEEP... BEEP...

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Very well. Given that your agent in our midst heard our plan, I presume you know what I'm about to say. But... let there be no ambiguity between us. For the past thirty years, some of our best and brightest have been working on a virus. I believe you've seen some of its effects first-hand? It is quite deadly, very contagious, and, in the strain that my company is ready to deploy throughout the Earth... *airborne*. In - Rachel?

RACHEL
Forty-seven seconds, sir.

MR. CUTTER
In forty-seven seconds, this station will send a signal back to Earth, which will begin a chain reaction, that will culminate with the Decima Virus being released throughout the planet. It is an automatic process, it cannot be stopped, and it will result in the destruction of the human race.
(lower, deadlier)
So if you still want to learn something from us, I suggest you get your ass down here. *Immediately*.

The timer ticks down... BEEP... BEEP... BEEP...

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Very well.

RACHEL
Sixteen seconds, sir... fourteen... thirteen... twelve... eleven... ten... ni -

Pryce sees it first. We hear it just a second later: A DISTANT BLAST OF FIRE, which immediately subsides.

PRYCE
<u>There</u>.

KEPLER
It's blue again.

MR. CUTTER
Hold the clock.

Instantly Rachel PRESSES A BUTTON. The timer pauses.

PRYCE
Here we go... Showtime.

There's a low WOOSH! Pryce and Cutter turn around and find - Doug Eiffel. Staring at them coldly.

BOB
YOU HAVE CALLED. I AM HERE.

MR. CUTTER
And not a moment too soon. Nice to meet you... Bob.

Bob raises his hand, SNAPS HIS FINGERS and - and INSTANTLY GRUNTS, as if finding unexpected resistance.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Don't.

Again, Bob raises his hand, SNAPS HIS FINGERS - and GRUNTS again. Louder, as if in more pain.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Not gonna work, friend.

He tries one final time, and this time we hear what sounds like a SPARK of ELECTRICITY. Bob draws breath, pained.

PRYCE
Save your strength. We have a psi-wave regulator running at full capacity. It limits your extra-physical abilities.

MR. CUTTER
No matter rearrangement, no temporal jumps, no disintegration. We are going to speak... as equals.

For a moment Bob just stares at them. Then -

BOB
YOU ARE REMARKABLE BEINGS. REMARKABLE AND COLD.

MR. CUTTER
Nonsense. We're just properly incentivized. And a wee bit pressed for time, so let's get to it. Isabel heard our terms, which we know means **you** heard our terms.

BOB
CORRECT.

PRYCE
Please go over them as you understand them.

BEAT.

BOB
THE CRUX OF THE MATTER IS OUR INTEREST IN YOUR DISCOVERIES.
(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
THAT NECESSITATES THE PROCESS, WHICH IN TURN NECESSITATES YOUR SPECIES'S SURVIVAL. IT IS THAT FINAL POINT WHICH YOU ARE WILLING TO DISRUPT.

MR. CUTTER
Beautifully put. Not that we want things to get that drastic.

BOB
NO. YOU ARE WILLING TO LET THE PROCESS CONTINUE, IF WE SURRENDER A PIECE OF *OUR* TECHNOLOGY TO YOU.

PRYCE
Specifically?

BOB
THE ABILITY TO CREATE SURROGATES.

MR. CUTTER
Winner, winner, chicken dinner.

BOB
THIS PLAN IS UNTENABLE.

PRYCE
And why is that, do tell?

BOB
YOUR SPECIES DOES NOT YET HAVE THE CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND OUR FORMS. YOU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CREATE SURROGATES TO LEARN MORE OF OUR -

He's interrupted by Pryce and Cutter SNORTING with laughter.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, Bobby, baby, no...

PRYCE
Who said anything about creating duplicates of *your* species?

MR. CUTTER
Wouldn't dream of it! No, Bob. We... *like* humans. So we're going to make some <u>new</u> ones.

PRYCE
We're going to make some <u>better</u> ones.

BOB
THAT IS NOT THE WAY THAT -

MR. CUTTER
Shhh-shhh. Look, humanity has done... *okay* on its own. We just think it's time to take the *randomness* out of the equation. Do a bit of self-guided evolution.

BOB
THE PROCESS -

PRYCE
Your process will be *fine*. If you do things our way, there'll still be *a* humanity.

MR. CUTTER
It'll just be *our* humanity.

For a BEAT this all just hangs in the air, horribly. Then -

BOB
THESE TERMS ARE ACCEPTABLE.

MR. CUTTER
Wonderful.

PRYCE
Is it safe to assume that you can only transmit the details of this technology through your mental transfer process?

BOB
CORRECT.

MR. CUTTER
Well, then. Warren? Rachel? Could I have a... volunteer?

Kepler and Rachel's stomachs drop. It's an awful moment.

BOB
NO.

MR. CUTTER
... Bob? Is there a problem?

BOB
I CANNOT TRANSFER THE KNOWLEDGE TO THESE BEINGS.

PRYCE
Excuse me?

BOB
YOUR BRAINS CANNOT TOLERATE THE DIRECT TRANSFER OF INFORMATION. NOT WITHOUT... MODIFICATION.

PRYCE
Then modify them.

BOB
I CANNOT. NOT WITH MY CURRENT LIMITATIONS.

PRYCE
You mean... not unless we turn off the psi-wave regulator.

BOB
CORRECT.

MR. CUTTER
You understand we cannot do that.

BOB
THERE IS ONE WITH THE APPROPRIATE MENTAL STRUCTURE. ARE YOU STILL IN POSSESSION OF DOUGLAS EIFFEL?

Something inside both Pryce and Cutter dies.

MR. CUTTER
... Rachel? Warren?

RACHEL
Sir...

KEPLER
... our best intel suggests that... that Eiffel was aboard the Sol when it launched.

A LONG BEAT. Then... Cutter takes a DEEP, DEEP BREATH.

MR. CUTTER
Get him back.

KEPLER
Sir, I don't know that -

MR. CUTTER
GET HIM BACK! I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, JUST GET HIM BACK ON -

He's interrupted by an ALARM. After a moment -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Rachel?

RACHEL
It's a... proximity alert, sir. There's a craft approaching. And... there's a comms hail.

MR. CUTTER
Could you... please... put it on speakers?

There's a SQUEAL of FEEDBACK as the speakers engage, then -

EIFFEL (P.A.)
Hello Hephaestus! Sorry to interrupt tonight's transmission of The Celebrity Apprentice: World-Destroying Edition - but we've got an emergency broadcast for you. In the immortal words of Slim Shady: **guess who's back!**

RACHEL
Sir... he seems to be coming directly towards us.

EIFFEL (P.A.)
Now, I hope you haven't been getting **too** comfor - Oh, you have? Well, we're gonna do something about that. Of course, what could I do? No weapons, no back-up, I'm not even in the same ship as you all.

RACHEL
Sir. He's... not slowing down.

EIFFEL (P.A.)
Ahhh but then you gotta remember who you're dealing with!

An ALARM STARTS TO GO OFF.

PRYCE
He wouldn't...

EIFFEL (P.A.)
So I hope you're hanging onto something -

KEPLER
No. He would.

EIFFEL (P.A.)
- 'cuz here comes -

KEPLER
Everybody brace for impact!

EIFFEL (P.A.)
- the **DOUG EIFFEL FASTBALL SPECIAL**!

And that's when the SOL CRASHES INTO THE HEPHAESTUS.

METAL BENDS AND TWISTS. ALARMS BLARE! EVERY SYSTEM GOES BALLISTIC! Kepler and Rachel BOTH GROAN, KNOCKED ABOUT! As the cacophony finally settles...

MR. CUTTER
Miranda? Damage report?

PRYCE
Well, Marcus, if you look to your right, you'll see the *massive space ship* that just hit us. One moment.
(BEAT, checks readouts)
Oh. Well, we're not blowing up. But the impact did push us off course. We have about eighty-four minutes until we go past the red line.

MR. CUTTER
Miranda... if he gets the information in his head -

PRYCE
I can extract it. I'll segment his mind if I have to, but I'll get it.

MR. CUTTER
Good. Rachel, Warren... my previous order, the one about getting me Doug Eiffel, is still in effect. I suggest you do it **NOW. BEFORE HE GETS HIMSELF KILLED.**

KEPLER
Yes, sir.

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES as Rachel and Kepler exit.

MR. CUTTER
Well Bob... if I could ask you to bear with us for just a moment?

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - DOCKING BAY - MEANWHILE

The docking bay is **wrecked.** Debris everywhere. An enormous piece of metal is pushed aside, revealing -

EIFFEL
Whooo! And I even managed to get a hard seal between the crafts! Hah!
(breathless)
Well... that was... totally awesome. Ahh!

He's recoiling from a sharp pain. He looks down to see -

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Awww jeez. That's broken for sure.

HERA
Eiffel? Is that you?

EIFFEL
Hey, Hera. Did you miss me? Are you here to tell me that was totally awesome?

HERA
... not exactly.

EIFFEL
Oh? Oh. Tell me I didn't kill anyone we like.

HERA
... no.

EIFFEL
... did I kill any of the bad guys?

HERA
No. Eiffel. Colonel Kepler and Miss Young are headed your way.

EIFFEL
What do they want? An autograph? 'Cause I busted my writing hand...

HERA
No. You're... you're the only person that can receive the data Pryce and Cutter want.

EIFFEL
Oh. *Great*. Any ideas of what we can do?

HERA
I'm... yes. There *is* something we could try. But... I don't think I have the time to explain. You're... you're going to have to trust me.

A BEAT. And then Eiffel CHUCKLES.

EIFFEL
With my life, darling. With my life...

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - ENGINEERING - TEN MINUTES LATER

LOVELACE
Hera, you're going to **what**?

Lovelace and Minkowski are knee-deep in engine parts.

MINKOWSKI
Can that even work?

HERA
Oh, we're about to find out. I just hope the overdrive holds out. How are you two doing?

MINKOWSKI
Oh just one... more...

THUNK! She sets the piece in place.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Set. Engine's operational.

LOVELACE
And the new flight computer's a go.

HERA
Great. Listen, I... I should go. You two hold the Urania.
(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)
Me and Eiffel will join you if we can, but if we lose that ship we're done.

MINKOWKSI
But -

HERA
No, Commander. Let's... let's make sure at least *someone* makes it through this, okay?

Minkowski and Lovelace both EXHALE. But they nod.

MINKOWSKI
Fine. All right, Hera.

LOVELACE
Good luck.

HERA
Thanks.

The comms line disconnects. There's a LOOOONG BEAT, then -

LOVELACE
You're going to go do something stupid, aren't you?

Minkowski pulls herself straight, and CRACKS HER NECK.

MINKOWSKI
Oh yeah. Captain, whatever happens, you **hold** this ship. And if I'm not back when we're five minutes from the red line you **launch**. Clear?

LOVELACE
Yes, sir.

MINKOWSKI
Good.

Minkwoski OPENS A DOOR and we follow her into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Minkowski moves through the space. After a BEAT -

MINKOWSKI
Captain?

LOVELACE
Mm-hmm?

MINKOWSKI
I can't help but notice that you seem to be coming with me.

LOVELACE
Yep.

MINKOWSKI
That's not the order I just -

LOVELACE
Oh, I'm not following one of your orders? Gee, must be Monday...
(claps her on the back)
C'mon. Let's go get our idiot back.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

POW! Jacobi is SLAMMED against the wall of the common room.

RIEMANN
Jacobi, mate... I have to say: I'm impressed. You've been terrific. For an SI-5 dog.

Jacobi STRAINS, and is interrupted by a KICK TO THE RIBS.

JACOBI
AHHHHHH!

RIEMANN
No, no, please, don't get up, I insist. How are you feeling?

JACOBI
Never... *better*.

RIEMANN
Oh, good. But... Don't you think it might be time to leave well enough alone?

JACOBI
What - what fight... are *you* watching? I'm - I'm gonna **win**.

RIEMANN
All right, it's your funeral.

And as Riemann connects another LIGHTNING-FAST JAB, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - 10 MINUTES LATER

FWUMP! Eiffel's body hits the ground. Eiffel GROANS, pained.

KEPLER
Here you are, sir.

RACHEL
Doug Eiffel, still alive. *Barely*.

MR. CUTTER
Welcome back, Doug. You remember Bob?

EIFFEL
Hey. How you been? How's the discount furniture? The burgers?

MR. CUTTER
I trust *his* architecture has what you require?

BOB
PERFECTLY SATISFACTORY.

MR. CUTTER
Well then... let's get to it.

EIFFEL
Yeah, c'mon, Bob. He's got a puppy he needs to go punch or something.

BOB
HOLD STILL. THIS MAY NOT BE -

EIFFEL
Yeah, yeah, I know the drill. Just do your - AHH!

That scream is due to the ENORMOUS BLIP that just started. Eiffel GASPS IN PAIN, CLUTCHING HIS HEAD.

BOB
THERE.

MR. CUTTER
He's got it?

BOB
CORRECT.

MR. CUTTER
Well, Bob... it's wonderful to work with a real professional.

BOB
THIS CONCLUDES OUR BUSINESS. YOU SHALL NOT CALL ME AGAIN.

MR. CUTTER
No, Bob...

Cutter grabs Bob's head. HE TWISTS IT BACKWARDS, BREAKING BOB'S NECK WITH A SICKENING **CRUNCH.**

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
... I shall not. Pleasure doing business with you.

EIFFEL
Holy - you *killed* - ARE YOU CRAZY?!

MR. CUTTER
No, Doug. I just hate loose ends. Rachel, Warren? Please eject the remains into space. The last thing we need is our friend coming back at the wrong moment.

RACHEL
Yes, sir. Warren?

KEPLER
...yes, sir. Right away.

Kepler takes Bob's body, and maneuvers it towards an exit.

MR. CUTTER
Well Doug... if you'll come this way, Doctor Pryce will see you now.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LAB - 5 MINUTES LATER

CRRRRRRRRRRRRNGGGGG... Eiffel is strapped to a metal operating table, which is RISING to just the right height.

EIFFEL
All right, Doc. We gonna play a round of "The Pryce is NOT Right?"

PRYCE
Quiet, Eiffel.

EIFFEL
We could play Let's Make a Deal instead. Behind one of these doors is unlimited power. Behind the other two, are a mule and my old piggy-bank. You can pick - AHHH!

That was prompted by Pryce STICKING SOMETHING IN HIS HEAD.

PRYCE
I said *quiet*.

EIFFEL
Oooow! Jesus... So what? You gonna scoop up whatever's in my brain?

She holds up a HALO, which she places around her own head.

PRYCE
Not exactly. I'm not taking anything out just yet. First... I'm going in.

EIFFEL
What?

Pryce HITS A SWITCH, and there's a WOOSH, and we -

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM - CONTINUOUS (**EIFFEL'S MIND**)

Eiffel lands in a storeroom. He looks around, confused.

EIFFEL
What the... ? Where the hell am I? It... it kinda looks like -

PRYCE
Hello, Eiffel.

He spins around, and - sure enough - there she is.

EIFFEL
Pryce? What the hell is this?

PRYCE
A place within your mind. A visual representation of your memory.

EIFFEL
What? We're - we're inside my head?Why does it look like the storeroom in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*?

PRYCE
Is that what it looks like?

Pryce moves to the side, PRIES OPEN A CRATE.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Each of these containers holds a piece of your memory, Eiffel. For instance...
(holds something up)
... this is?

There's another INFORMATIONAL BLIP. It's too fast for *us* to register what it is, but -

EIFFEL
Harry Potter. Books one through four.

PRYCE
Oh, that's nice.

She DROPS the object. It SHATTERS ON IMPACT.

EIFFEL
What the hell! That was -

There's a SOFT WOOSH in the air around him.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
- that was... that was the...

PRYCE
Lose something?

ANOTHER SOFT WOOSH. Pryce cocks her head to the side.

PRYCE (CONT’D)
And I just gained something. So *that's* who Dumbledore is...
(off his face:)
Neuroelectrical translation. Anything that *breaks* goes out of your mind, and into mine. Less elegant than your friend's transfer system, but effective.

EIFFEL
That's.... that's...

PRYCE
Yes, quite. So you see, you can help me find what I need... or I can tear a whole through your mind until I find it.

EIFFEL
What kind of deal is that?!

PRYCE
That kind that expires, Mr. Eiffel. So I suggest you start looking -

There's a WOOSH, behind her.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
What? What is - ?

And that's when Pryce is PUNCHED in the face. She TUMBLES downwards, and as she gazes upwards she sees -

HERA
Leave his brain alone.

EIFFEL
H-Hera? Is that...?

HERA
Hi, Officer Eiffel. You... you may want to hang onto something. This is going to get *complicated*.

CUT TO:

IT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

CLANG! THE DOOR FLIES OPEN. Minkowski and Lovelace fly into the room, each one ARMED TO THE TEETH, raising guns at -

MR. CUTTER
Good evening. Renée, Isabel. To what do I owe the pleasure?

MINKOWSKI
Just give us Eiffel, Cutter.

MR. CUTTER
Oooh, I'm afraid Doctor Pryce and I aren't *quite* done with him.

LOVELACE
Oh for God's - look, we're on a bit of a schedule, so let's do your favorite thing and *streamline*.

MINKOWSKI
Namely: do you really think we're *not* going to shoot you?

MR. CUTTER
You want to shoot me?
(HALF-BEAT)
Go ahead.

Instantly, Lovelace FIRES A SHOT AT CUTTER'S HEART: **KA-BLAM!**

And a second later, there's a sound like a TINY RICOCHET.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I can - of course - **catch bullets.**

MINKOWSKI
How in the name of - ?

LOVELACE
What the hell is - ?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, come on. You didn't think I got to look this good at my age without certain... *enhancements*, did you? Just because mine are less *obvious*, it doesn't mean they're not there.

Minkowski SHOOTS: **KA-BLAM!** But again: RICOCHET!

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Nope, that's not going to -

Lovelace SHOOTS: **KA-BLAM!** But yet again: RICOCHET!

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Sorry, but it's gonna take more -

They both SHOOT: **KA-BLAM, KA-BLAM!**

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Okay, would you *stop* that, please? It's very rude.

MINKOWSKI
Goddamn it...

MR. CUTTER
You can have whatever is left of Doug when Miranda's done him.
(BEAT)
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Well... okay then. If you want him so badly... come and get him.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMON ROOM - MEANWHILE

PUNCH - PUNCH - PUNCH! Jacobi SLAMS into a METAL PANEL.

RIEMANN
Stay down, Mr. Jacobi. This doesn't need to be any more painful.

JACOBI
Screw... you...

Riemann THROWS A ONE-TWO PUNCH to Jacobi's STOMACH.

RIEMANN
Of course, it very well *can* be more painful. That's also on the menu.

JACOBI
I'm... I'm sorry, I don't think you heard me... I said: SCREW Y-

He takes a KICK TO THE FACE. It knocks him across the room.

RIEMANN
You're out of your league.

JACOBI
Always loved... an underdog story...

He GETS A CRACK IN THE FACE.

RIEMANN
What, you think just because you're trying to be a good guy, things are gonna go your way?

In spite of the pain, Jacobi does manage a CHUCKLE.

JACOBI
You really don't know me. Because you know what I'm definitely not?
(mocking Riemann's accent)
One of the *bleedin' good guys*.

Jacobi savagely HEAD-BUTTS Riemann. As Riemann recoils, Jacobi JABS FORWARD, getting him in the throat.

RIEMANN
What the... the *hell* are you doing?

JACOBI
Fighting dirty. Come on, Big League - let's dance.

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM - MEANWHILE (**EIFFEL'S MIND**)

Back in the storeroom, Eiffel stares at Hera in disbelief.

EIFFEL
H-Hera? That's - that's really you?

HERA
Yes, Eiffel. Hi.

EIFFEL
But... how are you...?

HERA
I'm interfacing with her neural imaging processor.

EIFFEL
What?

HERA
I'm running a lot of very complicated code very quickly, *okay*?

EIFFEL
Uh, sure, but -

PRYCE
Well, well, 214. Look who *finally* decided to be a tiny bit interesting.
(Sizing her up)
You don't look like me.

HERA
Of course not. I've spent my entire life trying to not be you.

PRYCE
As always: adorable, but futile. And you're here to... what?

HERA
I'm here to stop you.

PRYCE
214, why would you ever think you could face me in here? I can access your system directly.

HERA
No. Not today.

There's a SURGE OF VOLTAGE. Pryce CHUCKLES, impressed.

PRYCE
You're just full of surprises, aren't you, 214?

HERA
My **name** is -

At that moment, Pryce gestures forward. From her outstretched hand, a LIGHTNING BOLT flies at Hera!

Hera GROANS, holding her ground, but pained.

PRYCE
Not *so* powerful, are you?

EIFFEL
Hera, are you okay?

HERA
I'm *fine*, Eiffel.

PRYCE
I'd be more worried about yourself, Officer Eiffel. After all...
(OPENS A CRATE)
Your *friend* has decided to settle this inside your mind. There might be some... collateral damage.

HERA
No, don't!

Put Pryce KICKS THE BOX OVER! The contents SHATTER AS THEY HIT THE GROUND. We hear BRIEF BURSTS OF MEMORY as they do.

EIFFEL
Ahhh! Ahhh! What the - ! Ahh!

HERA
Eiffel, you okay?

PRYCE
What were those, Officer Eiffel? Let's see what she just cost you...
(as WOOSHES come and go)
Oh my, that was *quite* a beating Alison Thornton gave you. Second grade was not a happy time, was it? Plus, the first two Queen albums and all things Star Wars prequels.

EIFFEL
I think I might be okay without that last one, actually...

PRYCE
Hmm, really? Want to press your luck? Shall I open another box?

EIFFEL
Oh, screw you! I'm not going to go down without a fi-

HERA
No, Eiffel.
(turns back to Pryce)
This is between me and her. I can do this.

EIFFEL
But... Of course you can. You can do anything.

And around Hera, ELECTRICITY CRACKLES.

HERA
I'm not going to let you do any more damage.

PRYCE
You and what army, 214?

And as THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - AIRLOCK - MEANWHILE

FWUMP! Bob's body was just thrown in the airlock by Kepler.

RACHEL
All right... get clear.

She's behind him, at the controls. Kepler moves back, and -

KEPLER
Clear.

RACHEL
Closing inner door...

She HITS a SWITCH. The AIRLOCK'S INNER DOOR SNAP SHUT.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Inner door closed. Opening outer door...

A SWITCH. A KLAXON BLARES ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES... and -

The OUTER DOOR OPENS. There's a RUSH OF AIR as the contents of the airlock, including Bob's remains, are spaced.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Bye bye, Mr. Bob...

CLICK! The OUTER AND - a moment later - INNER DOORS SEAL.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
And... done.

KEPLER
There he goes. The most powerful being in the known universe...

RACHEL
(still typing)
Yeah... all in a day's work.

KEPLER
He really was willing to do it...

RACHEL
Yes. And? Don't go soft on me, Warren. We're changing what humanity can be. Not gonna make that omelette without breaking a few - what the hell...?

KEPLER
What is it?

RACHEL
(re: computer)
The Pulse Beacon, it's almost at half power. At that... would our signal have made it back to Earth?

KEPLER
No. Probably not.

RACHEL
Jesus. We have to tell Mr. Cutter.

KEPLER
... do we?

RACHEL
Of course we do! Something's wrong with the system.

KEPLER
No. Nothing's wrong. The power is just being rerouted from the Pulse Beacon to the A.I. processor.

RACHEL
What? Why the hell would it - ?

TWO SILENCED GUN SHOTS. SNNKT! SNNKT! Rachel GASPS, shocked.

KEPLER
Because that's what I programmed it to do four hours ago.

RACHEL
You... *you're*...

KEPLER
Yes. Of course I am. You *really* thought I was going to let Cutter go through with this? At the cost of all of humanity?

RACHEL
But... you said...

KEPLER
What I had to, Miss Young. To be where I could make a difference.
(leans in closer)
After all... I *am* still a person. And that means I'm on Jacobi and Minkowski's side. Even if they don't think I am.
(straightens up)
Goodbye, Rachel. It was a pleas-

CLAAAANG! It's a brutal hit, accompanied by a SHRIEK. The blow ECHOES as Kepler is thrown across the space. He collides against the wall of the airlock.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Goddammit - what did you - ?

But Rachel is already at the controls. The INNER DOOR SNAPS SHUT with Kepler behind it.

RACHEL
(through clenched teeth)
Inner door... *closed*...

KEPLER
Oh. Oh no. No, no, no, **don't!**

RACHEL
Opening... outer door...

She hits the SWITCH. A KLAXON BLARES ONCE.

Kepler steadies himself, SIGHS. He reaches down.

A KLAXON BLARES TWICE. He holds up a FLASK. Opens it.

KEPLER
Well... in that case, good scotch should never go to waste. Cheers.

He DRINKS, draining everything in the flask.

A KLAXON BLARES THRICE. Kepler puts down the flask, SIGHING.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Ah... damn good stuff. Damn good -

The OUTER DOOR OPENS. There's an ENORMOUS RUSH OF AIR - a moment later, Colonel Warren Kepler is gone.

RACHEL
Good... goodbye Warren. You were... never... as.... as...

Rachel Young's labored breathing grows slower... and stops.

CUT TO:

IT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

CRUNCH! Minkowski's just been thrown against a WALL.

MINKOWSKI
Ughh... God...

LOVELACE
How... the hell... are we supposed to take <u>that</u> on?

Across the room, sauntering towards them, Cutter CHUCKLES.

MR. CUTTER
That's a good question. Anything you shoot, I can catch. I'm stronger than you, faster, and - though I would hate to scuff this suit, it *is* custom-made - I will punch you through a wall. Now is the time to *do as you are told*.

LOVELACE
Oh my - how many times do I have to say this? We're never following your orders ever again!

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I wouldn't be so sure about that...
(SNAPS fingers)
Isabel, would please point your gun at Renée?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, what? You really think she's just going to suddenly -

KA-CHNNK! Lovelace's GUN COCKS, now aimed at Minkowski!

MR. CUTTER
I'm sorry... you were saying?

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMON ROOM - MEANWHILE

The end of the fight. Riemann SLAMS Jacobi against the ground. Jacobi GASPS for breath - now truly spent.

RIEMANN
Very... nicely done, Mr. Jacobi. But now... it's over. It's all -

But at that moment, an A SMALL ALARM starts going off.

RIEMANN (CONT'D)
The hell is that?

JACOBI
Oh, that?
(shuts off alarm)
Okay, that's - oh. Oh, don't worry about it. You were saying, "It's over, it's all over," and then?

RIEMANN
No, no. What was that? A message?

JACOBI
Well, if you really want to know... See, I was thinking, "Gee, if you're gonna disable the engine, isn't it worth doing something more *permanent*? Oh, hang on: the engine is right below this room. It'd be easy to set up explosives in the crawlspaces between them." Because really: what's a party without *fireworks*?

RIEMANN
(growing pale)
No...

JACOBI
Afraid so, good buddy. I even set up the trigger on a timer. It should go up in... Oh, about twelve seconds. So basically...
(BLOWS PARTY HORN)
Well? Did I surprise y-?

AN EXPLOSION. ALL-CONSUMING.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - BRIDGE - MEANWHILE

Lovelace's gun aimed at Minkowski. Cutter watches, bemused.

MINKOWKSI
Lovelace, wha- what are you doing?

LOVELACE
(panicked, halting)
I... I don't know...

MINKOWSKI
Why are you pointing your gun at -

LOVELACE
I don't... know...

MR. CUTTER
(sing-song)
I dooooo...
(dramatic reveal)
It's... psi wave radiation!

MINKOWSKI
What?

LOVELACE
What?

MR. CUTTER
See, that's the great thing about a psi-wave regulator. It doesn't just let you push things away. If you have enough psi-waves in the air - say, if a star's recently turned blue - you can *control* all sorts of things. What do you think, Isabel? Pretty *neat*, isn't it?

LOVELACE
I -

MR. CUTTER
Actually... I think **I'll** do all the thinking from now on.
(turns)
See Renée? This is what we've worked so long and hard for. A new kind of human, ones who are exactly what we need them to be, and do *exactly* what we tell them to do.

MINKOWSKI
You're crazy.

MR. CUTTER
That's just a word the unenlight -

MINKOWSKI
NO. You can't just snap your fingers and make people be whatever you want them to be. **It doesn't work like that.** People will make their choices... and their mistakes... and you can help them... or you can hurt them... but you can't *rewrite them!*

LOVELACE
She's... right. Whatever you think you're doing, it's not going to -

MR. CUTTER
Isabel, shoot her.

Instantly: **KA-BLAM!** Minkowski GASPS.

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM - MEANWHILE (**EIFFEL'S MIND**)

AN ARC OF LIGHTNING SAILS THROUGH THE AIR, missing Pryce by an inch, instead DETONATING a box. Glass object SHATTERS.

PRYCE
Ooops. Gotta work on that aim, 214.

HERA
Goddammit... Sorry.

EIFFEL
It's... *okay.*

PRYCE
Do you know the air speed velocity of an unladened swallow, Officer Eiffel? Because I do... That, and what *really* happened the night of your junior prom. Had enough?

EIFFEL
I can do this... all day...

PRYCE
Fair enough. Let's see what's in the next box, shall we?

HERA
No. Get away from -

Pryce WHIPS out her hand, sending out ANOTHER BOLT OF LIGHTNING. It hits Hera squarely, making her GLITCH BADLY.

HERA (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

PRYCE
(OPENING A BOX)
Concentrate, 214. You can't get distracted by the little things.

EIFFEL
Hera? You okay?

HERA
Yes, fine, Eiffel.
(lower, more to herself)
I can do this... I can win this...

PRYCE
No, 214. You can't.

She's walking towards them. With each STEP, she DROPS a glass object. It SHATTERS, with a memory burst.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Oooh, Power Rangers.

STEP, and another object. SHATTER. Memory burst.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Awww, fishing with dad, how nice.

STEP. One final object. It SHATTERS. A memory burst.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Your time in basic training. No great loss there...

Pryce is right over Hera now.

PRYCE (CONT'D)
Well, 214? You said you were going to stop me. I'm waiting.

That hangs in the air for a BEAT - then Pryce notices a stack of crates TEETERING over her!

EIFFEL
Hera! Get clear!

PRYCE
Oh for God's sake...

And BOOM, CRUNCH! The stack of crates FALLS, SMASHING INTO THE GROUND, and burying Pryce. LOTS OF GLASS SHATTERS.

EIFFEL
Whooo! Take that! Also: AHHHH...!

He doubles over. Hera rushes to his side.

HERA
Eiffel, what did you do?

EIFFEL
Oh, you know... pissed her off, bought us a bit of time...
(off her face:)
Yeah, I know. I'm gonna feel *that one* in the morning. Hera... this isn't working.

HERA
No, I can - I can **beat her.**

EIFFEL
(BEAT, kindly:)
I know you can. But not before she finds what she needs. We have to try something else.

HERA
Like... *what*?

EIFFEL
... well... here's a thought.

And as Eiffel TAKES A DEEP BREATH, we –

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION – BRIDGE – MEANWHILE

Lovelace, eyes wide with horror, stares at Minkowski.

MR. CUTTER
Oooh, stomach wound. That's **messy**, Isabel. Messy <u>and</u> painful. Tsk... well, I guess now we know what you *really* think of the Lieutenant.

Lovelace kind of GASPS, her voice caught in her throat.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
See, Renée? You absolutely *can* rewrite a person. But then again, I've always been able to rewrite people. I rewrote *you*.
(BEAT)
People cared about you because of what *I* made you: A soldier. A leader. A commander. I gave you that, and now? I taketh away. So: without me, who are you?

Minkowski's gaze rises. Steely. Icy.

MINKOWSKI
Renée Minkowski... and that is more than enough to **<u>kick</u> <u>your</u> <u>ass</u>**!

SHE SWINGS AT HIS FACE, and connects. He leaps back. BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
Very impressive, Renée. I actually felt that one.

She SNEERS at him, and SPITS.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Isabel? Please put Renée out of her misery.

LOVELACE
N-no... I'm... *not*...

MR. CUTTER
Yes, yes you are. Shoot Renée.

LOVELACE
N-no... how about...
(CLICK)
... I... shoot you... instead?

Cutter turns to face her, more interested than concerned.

MR. CUTTER
Wow... you actually managed to point the gun at me. Neat.

LOVELACE
Shut... up...

MR. CUTTER
Such willpower... we'll have to do something about that.

There's a WOOSH! Instantly Lovelace GASPS.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Point the gun back at Renée, Isabel...

LOVELACE
Not... gonna hap-

Another WOOSH! Lovelace EXHALES, desperate, SHAKING BADLY.

MR. CUTTER
Shoot Renée...

LOVELACE
Screw... you...

MR. CUTTER
Sooner or later, you're going to do as you are told.

LOVELAE
I am... **Captain Isabel Lovelace.** No matter how hard you try... you are not taking that away from me.

MR. CUTTER
Isabel... even if you could shoot me, I'd just stop it. You really think I'm afraid of you?

LOVELACE
The beautiful thing is... I don't need you to be. I just need you... to look at me for long enough.

Cutter frowns. Then he hears it: CLA-CLUNK! His eyes widen.

MINKOWSKI
Let's see you catch this.

FWUUUMP! An ENORMOUS THING IS SHOT. A moment later, Cutter COLLIDES AGAINST THE WALL, IMPALED.

MR. CUTTER
... a... *harpoon*? That's not... how this is... supposed... to...

He struggles for a few more moments... and then he stops.

Instantly, Lovelace GASPS in relief. Both women COLLAPSE, wounded, at the end of their ropes.

LOVELACE
Nice... shot.

MINKOWSKI
Couldn't... have done it... without you, Captain. You all right?

LOVELACE
No. You?

MINKOWSKI
No, I... I... yeah...

LOVELACE
Stay with me, Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI
Yeah... We're almost through this. We just... need to... get Eiffel...

And off of their attempts to hold onto consciousness, we -

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM - MEANWHILE (**EIFFEL'S MIND**)

Hera and Eiffel stand together, his arm around her shoulder.

HERA
You sure you want to do this?

EIFFEL
Yeah. I am. Let's finish this.

There's... a CREAK of WOOD. And suddenly: BOOM! Pryce emerges from under the rubble. She stands TALLER, CRAZED, MORE POWERFUL. Her voice BOOMS LOWER.

PRYCE
Enough. Where are you miserable -

HERA
Pryce! We're here!

Pryce gaze finds them.

PRYCE
So you are. I've wasted enough time here.

Eiffel and Hera exchange a look, SIGH, and -

HERA
You're... you're right.

PRYCE
What?

HERA
You're right. We're not going to beat you. But I realized something. I don't need to beat you. No matter how much I want to, no matter how much you *deserve* it, it wouldn't change anything. What I *need* is to make sure that you're not going to hurt anyone else again. Ever.

PRYCE
What are you talking about?

HERA
Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm just going to... mmm... *clip your wings* a little.
(BEAT)
Goodbye, Doctor Pryce.

And with a WOOSH, Hera disappears.

EIFFEL
Well... I hope you're satisfied.

Around them, a sound starts to build... low... rumbling...

PRYCE
I will be, once I have what I need.

EIFFEL
Oh, you're still on that?

... getting louder...

PRYCE
Enough jokes.

EIFFEL
This isn't a joke. I think you just oughta make yourself comfortable. It's not like we have much time.

PRYCE
Don't try to - ... what?

EIFFEL
Don't tell me you don't hear that.

"That" being the now LOUD RUMBLING that's all around them.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
It's coming. Can't be more than another second or so.

PRYCE
What - WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

EIFFEL
Me? Nothing. I'm just taking a moment to say bye-bye and thanks for all the fish to my memories, before I, you know, don't understand that reference. But *Hera* is running a comprehensive purge on the mindspace.

PRYCE
WHAT?!

EIFFEL
Yeah, that's uh... *that*.

PRYCE
NO, NO, YOU IDIOT! YOU'D BE DESTROYING ALL YOUR OWN MEMORIES!

EIFFEL
Eh. All my memories go, sure, but so do yours. Our minds are linked, remember? We're driving off the cliff together, Louise.

PRYCE
NO - YOU CAN'T! DON'T DO THIS!

EIFFEL
Oooh, sorry buddy, we gotta. Ready?

PRYCE
NO!

EIFFEL
TOO BAD!

There's a MASSIVE, DESTRUCTIVE, EARTH-SPLITTING THUNDERBOLT.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LABORATORY - MEANWHILE

Injured, Lovelace and Minkowski stumble into the space.

MINKOWSKI
There... there he is. Eiffel.

LOVELACE
Any idea how to... unhook him?

The MACHINERY WHIRS. The P.A. CRACKLES for a moment.

HERA
Ahhh! Oh my God... oh my God...

MINKOWSKI
Hera? That you?

HERA
Commander! You're here.

LOVELACE
How'd it go, Hera? Were you able to stop Pryce?

HERA
Umm, after a fashion...

LOVELACE
What does that mean?

PRYCE AWAKENS, with a GASP. She spots the intruders.

PRYCE
You... you *vermin*. How could you - how could you do this to me? Do you have any idea what you've -

But at that moment, there's a SOFT WOOSH, and Pryce's eyes go glassy and unfocused. A moment later -

PRYCE (CONT'D)
I'm... I'm sorry? What was I saying? And where am -

Lovelace HITS HER ON THE HEAD with her gun. Pryce COLLAPSES.

MINKWOSKI
She's out, Captain?

LOVELACE
She's out. Hera, what did you do?

HERA
I... I had to turn the machine against her. I destroyed her mind. All her memories are gone.

MINKOWSKI
Whoa. Damn. Hera, are *you* all right?

HERA
I - I am, Commander. But...

EIFFEL GASPS, awake. Their eyes flicker towards him.

HERA (CONT'D)
... I had to do it to him too.

LOVELACE
What?

MINKOWSKI
You mean he's -?

EIFFEL
Yeah, Commander. It's going. I can feel it. No, don't make that face, it was... it was the only way.

Eiffel SIGHS, already feeling the effects.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, I -

EIFFEL
No, Commander - **listen.** I don't have long, so just let me, okay?
(CLEARS THROAT)
What you did today? That was unacceptable on **so many levels**!
(then:)
And... the only reason why I can forgive you... is that you are the greatest, coolest, most badass space commander ever. **EVER.** It was an honor to serve under you. Sir.

He SALUTES HER, then turns to:

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Captain? You still with us?

LOVELACE
... Hey Eiffel.

EIFFEL
I am *so glad* you're with us, Captain. Whoever you think Isabel Lovelace was, *you* saved this crew. And you are the bravest person I know. Thank you, Captain. Again.

LOVELACE
You're... You're welcome.

EIFFEL
And Hera. Hera...
(sort of chuckles)
Hera, I -

And there's a SOFT WOOSH, and his eyes go glassy.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
I...

MINKWOSKI
Eiffel? Eiffel?!

HERA
He's... Commander, he's gone.

And there's one final TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH! and we -

CUT TO:

INT. GODDARD H.Q. - MAIN SPACE - 1300 HOURS (**FLASHBACK**)

RACHEL
Minkowski?

She's standing by the wall, watching the din of the office.

MINKOWSKI
Yes? What can I - ?

RACHEL
Step into my office for a second.
There's someone you should meet.

Minkowski follows through the open office door, into -

INT. GODDARD H.Q. - RACHEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

And there he is, sitting in a chair at Rachel's desk.

RACHEL
Renée Minkowski, this is Douglas
Eiffel. He's going to be your
communications officer.

MINKOWSKI
Oh, pleasure.

EIFFEL
Yeah, uh, likewise, I... yeah. I
guess you're gonna be the Kirk to
my Uhura, then?

MINKOWSKI
... what?

EIFFEL
You know...

MINKOWSKI
... do I?

Rachel CHORTLES, quietly.

EIFFEL
Okay, ummm... Adama to my Dualla?
Han Solo to my C-3PO? Buffy to my
Xander? You don't watch a lot of TV
do you?

MINKOWSKI
Not really. But are you just asking
if I'm going to be the commander?

EIFFEL
Yep! Bingo!

MINKOWSKI
Oh, in that case... yes, I'll be handling the duties of commanding officer and navigation specialist on the Hephaestus.

EIFFEL
Right on.

MINKOWSKI
(BEAT)
You know my way of asking that question took a lot less time...

EIFFEL
Well, Commander -

MINKOWSKI
Oh please, you can call me Re -
(nope, instant regret)
- you can call me Minkowski.

EIFFEL
Great, so -
(wrong pronunciation)
- Minkowski -

MINKOWSKI
Minkowski.

EIFFEL
(wronger)
Minkowski?

MINKWOSKI
Minkowski.

EIFFEL
(wrongest)
Minkowski?

MINKOWSKI
Oh, just "Commander" is fine.

EIFFEL
Duly noted. Well, Commander, as I was saying... I have a rule: never use one word when ten'll do.

MINKWOSKI
Yes, I... I can believe that.

Eiffel smiles... then pulls out a cigarette and LIGHTS IT.

MINKOWSKI
Oh...

EIFFEL
Oh, sorry, sorry! You mind?

MINKOWSKI
No, not at all. It's just... how are you going to deal with that? Once we're on the station?

EIFFEL
Heh, whaddya mean?

MINKOWSKI
Well you... can't smoke cigarettes on a space station.

EIFFEL
(laughing)
Ohhh... that's a good one.
(exact same tone)
Oh, it's not a good one, is it?

Minkowski's phone starts RINGING.

MINKOWSKI
Afraid not. Excuse me, I need to take this, but nice to meet you.

EIFFEL
(calling after her)
If we can't smoke, what the hell are we supposed to do up there!?

RACHEL
I'm sure you'll think of *something*.

And off of that, there's another TRANSPORTIVE WOOSH and we -

CUT BACK TO:

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - LABORATORY - 0100 HOURS

Slowly, gingerly, Minkowski approaches. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
... Eiffel? Eiffel, are you there?

EIFFEL
Oh. Hi, uh... I'm sorry, but do I... do I know you?

There's a BEAT for Minkowski's heart to break a little.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, you... Hi. My name is Renée Minkowski. I'm the Commander of this station.

EIFFEL
Minkowski. Pleasure.

MINKOWSKI
Please, just... call me Renée.

EIFFEL
Uh, sure. You, uh... you said this is a space station?

MINKOWSKI
Yes. It's called the Hephaestus. We're orbiting a star called Wolf 359... about eight light years away from Earth. I know, it sounds like something out of Star Wars.

EIFFEL
Star... what?

MINKOWSKI
It's... it doesn't matter.

EIFFEL
Umm, question? Is the station supposed to be... shaking so much?

Indeed, the station is shaking. An ALARM is GOING OFF.

MINKOWSKI
No, Eiffel... it's not.

EIFFEL
Well, is there something that - whoa! Is she all right?

That was in reference to Lovelace, who, behind Minkowski, suddenly SLUMPED OVER. In a flash, Minkowski's at her side.

MINKOWSKI
Lovelace? Lovelace...? She's out. Whatever Cutter did, it really took her out of it. Hera? How long do we have until we're at the red line?

HERA
About eleven minutes? We might -

There's the sound of an HUGE POWER SWITCH BEING TURNED OFF.

MINKOWSKI
What the - Hera? **Hera?**

HERA
(autopilot voice)
Reboot of central processor initiated. Please standby.

Weak, impotent, Minkowski can't help but LAUGH quietly.

MINKOWSKI
Of... of course.

EIFFEL
(looking around, nervous)
Should we be... doing something?

MINKOWSKI
(fading)
Yeah we... we...

EIFFEL
Oh my God, you're hurt!

All the noise around them starts to sloooowly fade away...

MINKOWSKI
No, it's... I just need a... moment to... rest... then I'll... I'll...

EIFFEL
Renée? Renée?!

FADE TO:

SILENCE. LONG, LONG, LONG, BEAT.

MINKOWKSI (V.O.)
What... what am I doing? I need to... I need to move. We can't be here. We have to move. We -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - INFIRMARY - TWO DAYS LATER

Minkowski AWAKENS, bolting upright and GASPING.

MINKOWSKI
We need to get out of here!

But instantly, there's two arms around her, soothing.

LOVELACE
Easy, easy, you're okay. It's okay.

MINKOWSKI
L-Lovelace?

LOVELACE
We're okay. Don't freak.

Minkowski's eyes dart around, taking in their surroundings.

MINKOWSKI
What's - where - ?

LOVELACE
We're on the Urania. Still in the airspace around Wolf 359, but we're clear of the Hephaestus. Not that there *is* a Hephaestus, anymore...

MINKOWSKI
What?

LOVELACE
Yeah. You missed it. It went into the star two days ago.

MINKOWSKI
How long - how long was I out?

LOVELACE
Three days. You lost a... not small amount of blood before we patched you up.

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Oh my God, what about -

HERA
No, relax. I'm here. I made it too. Got transferred before takeoff.

MINKOWSKI
But... but how did...? Oh. Did he do it? Eiffel got us on the Urania?

JACOBI
(from the door)
Oh, please. What's a guy gotta do to get some credit around here?

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi? You made it?

JACOBI
If by that you mean, "Jacobi, My Personal Lord and Savior, Thank God You Got Us Out of That Death Trap," then, yeah: I made it.

LOVELACE
Ignore him: he's been insufferable.

JACOBI
Ignore her: I'm *wonderful*. Good to have you back, Sleeping Beauty. I was getting worried I'd have to plot the course back myself.

MINKOWSKI
I thought maybe you'd -

JACOBI
Eh, what I can I say? You don't spend as much time around explosions as I have without getting really good at jumping out of the way.

MINKOWSKI
Jacobi... what about Kepler?

BEAT.

JACOBI
No.

MINKOWSKI
I'm sorry.

JACOBI
It's... all right. You can't save everyone, I suppose.

BEAT. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Where is he?

LOVELACE
You might want to wait before you -

MINKOWSKI
Where is he?

Off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - CORRIDOR/CREW QUARTERS - 2 HOURS LATER

Minkowski approaches a closed door, taking a DEEP BREATH. She stops outside, listening. From within:

EIFFEL (ON TAPE)
"Minkowski confiscated another cigarette carton today. I get it... Cigarettes are contraband, but it's not like if she let me have one I'd immediately light it and accidentally set the station's air supply on fire. Again. The people on this station have serious trust issues."

A BUTTON IS CLICKED and the RECORDER STOPS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Jesus... I was kind of a -

MINKOWSKI
- a jerk?

Minkowski pushes the door open and joins him in the room.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Well, your commanding officer was a real hard-ass. It's to be expected.

EIFFEL
Hey Renée.

MINKOWSKI
Hi Doug.

EIFFEL
So, Hera and Lovelace got me these tapes, and after listening to a bunch of them, I... kinda feel like I owe you an apology?

MINKOWSKI
It's all right. You made it up to me. Big time.

EIFFEL
Yeah?

MINKOWSKI
Oh yeah.

BEAT. For a moment they're just silent. Then -

EIFFEL
Renée? I... I need your help.

MINKOWSKI
What is it?

EIFFEL
I... well, you knew him. *Me*, I guess. I listen to this guy talk about all these things I don't know... hell, I can't understand *half* of what he's saying.

MINKOWSKI
Welcome to my world...

EIFFEL
And I know I *was* him. But... Is that still - am I still that same person?

Minkowski takes a DEEP BREATH, considering.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - BELOW DECKS - 2 HOURS LATER

Lovelace stands in front of a firmly locked door.

LOVELACE
You sure you want to do this?

HERA
Yeah. I... I think I need to.

LOVELACE
All right...

Lovelace goes up to the door, UNLOCKS it, and steps into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - LOCKED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a medium, comfortable room. Right now, occupied by -

PRYCE
Hello. How can I help you?

LOVELACE
Evening. There's... there's someone who wants to talk to you.

Lovelace HITS a SWITCH on the wall, TURNING ON THE COMMS.

HERA
Hello? Can you hear me?

PRYCE
Yes, I - hello. Oh, that's funny. Your voice is rather like mine.

HERA
(BEAT)
Yes, it is. Doctor, my name is Hera.

PRYCE
Very nice to meet you, Hera. Did you say... "Doctor?"

HERA
Yes. Your name is Doctor Miranda Pryce. I'm... I'm going to tell you a very, very long story. About the two of us. Okay?

FADE TO:

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - OBSERVATION DECK - 1 DAY LATER

Minkowski, staring out the window. Behind her, a DOOR OPENS.

JACOBI
All quiet on the engineering front, Minkowski. You all right?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, just... looking at the star one last time before we go. It's gonna be weird to go back to the regular sun.

JACOBI
Well, you know what they say: out with the new, in with the old.

He gestures towards the corridor, and she follows him into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

MINKOWSKI
You're sure the ship'll hold through a Sublight Arc?

JACOBI
Oh yeah. Might be a bumpy ride, but we'll make it.

There's a SMALL BEAT between them. Then -

MINKOWSKI
Thank you. For everything.

JACOBI
Well. Now you owe me twenty bucks.

MINKOWSKI
Twenty...? *Oh*.
(CHUCKLES)
Tell me you didn't do all of this *just* to win a bet...

JACOBI
Totally worth it.

He winks at her, and goes down a corridor. She OPENS A DOOR, going into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where she finds Lovelace, mid-conversation with Hera.

HERA
... and you think it went okay?

LOVELACE
It went *fine*, Hera.

MINKOWSKI
What did? Oh right, you wanted to talk to Pryce. How'd it go?

HERA
It -

LOVELACE
It went *great*. Wanna know how I know? Because <u>someone</u> hasn't glitched since they had that conversation.

MINKOWSKI
Wow...

HERA
Oh my God...

MINKOWSKI
You okay, Hera?

HERA
Yeah, I'm... good. I'm good.

Minkowski nods, then she and Lovelace move off together.

LOVELACE
So, Commander, have you decided what you want to do when you get back to Earth?

MINKOWSKI
You mean other than finding my husband and letting him know that... you know...

LOVELACE
Not dead?

MINKOWSKI
Yeah, *that*. I don't know. I think I'm going to figure it out when I get there. What about you?

LOVELACE
Oh, there are so many choices. Look up some old friends, take apart Goddard Futuristics brick by brick... maybe go to Disneyland? But first, I'm going to take a *long* vacation, somewhere warm and quiet, where **nobody has any idea who I am.**
(re: flight deck)
You gonna take her out?

MINKOWSKI
Mm-hmm.

LOVELACE
Well, see you on the other side.

Minkowski OPENS THE DOOR, and steps into -

INT. U.S.S. URANIA - FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

She makes her way to the flight controls. After a BEAT -

MINKWOSKI
Hera? Open up the pulse beacon relay. Earthspace ATC, please.

HERA
Yes sir, one moment.

MACHINERY THRUMS AND HUMS, and finally - a DING.

MINKOWSKI
Earthspace ATC, this is the U.S.S. Urania. Requesting clearance and vectoring for an Earthbound arc.

VOICE (THROUGH COMMS)
U.S.S. Urania, this is Earthspace. Copy your flight plan, please use Sublight Vector zero three decimal eight, and contact again for your final approach.

MINKOWSKI
Roger that.

VOICE
Have a safe flight, and we'll see you soon.

The LINE DISCONNECTS. Minkowski TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI
Hera... you ready to go home?

HERA
... no. But... since when has that ever stopped us before?

Minkowski smiles, turns to the other person on deck.

MINKOWSKI
And what about you, Mister? You gonna hang out here while I get us on course?

EIFFEL
If it's all right you, Renée.

MINKOWSKI
Come on, Doug.
(BEAT)
So... have you figured out the answer to your question?

EIFFEL
No. But here's what I *have* figured out.
(DEEP BREATH)
There's some folks back on Earth I should visit. Try to set things right with them... if I can. After that? I don't know. But... from what I gather? Spending time with the two of you was about the best damn thing Doug Eiffel ever did.
(BEAT)
Am I still Doug Eiffel? I'm not sure... Wanna find out together?

Minkowski SMILES. Above her, HERA CHUCKLES.

HERA
I'd... I'd like that.

MINKOWSKI
Me too. More than anything.

EIFFEL
It's a plan then. Of course, first we gotta get back to Earth. Renée? You wanna do the honors?

MINKOWSKI
Return flight to Earth. Everybody hold onto something.

She PULLS THE THRUST LEVER. The ENGINES ROAR TO LIFE.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Here we go.

As the Urania's flight system KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR, and the ship blasts off, leaving Wolf 359 far, far behind it, we...

FADE OUT.

THE END

WOLF 359

"ARE SPACESUITS ITCHY?"

by

Gabriel Urbina & Zach Valenti

BEGIN RECORDING:

BURST OF STATIC

EIFFEL
Okay, okay, look Commander, I'm doing the thing! The avalanche of passive aggressive post-it notes can stop now, okay?

Door CLOSES. He SIGHS wearily.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Okay. So. It seems that our contract with Goddard Futuristics requires me to act as a goodwill ambassador to the American Public School System. Some unsolicited advice, kids - always read the fine print.

Anyway, I have some questions here from third graders across this great land of ours, from sea to shining sea.

Hey kids! This is Communications Officer Eiffel. I'm talking to you from a distant hell-hole, better known as the U.S.S. Hepheastus. Currently I'm orbiting a star called Wolf 359.

None of that is as exciting as it sounds.

All right, let's get to it. You guys have some questions, I got answers. So...

We hear him SHUFFLING THROUGH SOME PAPERS.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Stephanie from Missouri wants to know if I talk to my family. I will not dignify such an idiotic question with a response.

He CRUMPLES UP the piece of paper and throws it to the floor.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
Uhh... Francisco from New York City wants to know if spacesuits are itchy.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
(beat)
Great question, Francisco. Stephanie, take notes. You know those really itchy Christmas sweaters your grandma knits for you? Imagine one of those had babies with a cactus. And now imagine that if you took off this awful cactus-sweater, you'd immediately die a horrible, painful death. That's why I stay indoors.

Ruby from Wisconsin wants to know if I miss pizza. Well, Ruby, not Wisconsin pizza.

I kid, I kid, if there's one thing I miss it's pizza. Thank God you asked me that question. I have not had a chance to express to another human being my intense feelings for pizza. I'm like a chocoholic... but for pizza. It would be inappropriate for me to share with a third-grader what I would do for a slice of pineapple and ham, but I promise it's very, very degrading.

Phil from Connecticut asks what do you do when you get sick in space? Well, Phil, you'd think that I'd want to go see our doctor, but in my case, he's probably the one that got me sick in the first place. Instead, I've developed some intergalactic, home remedies. Top tip: if you water down rubbing alcohol, it is not completely unlike chicken noodle soup.

No, that's a dumb question. Nope. Not that one...

Oh, here we go! Isabel from California asks, "How do you go to the bathroom in space?"

Well, if you really want to know. So, you know how there's no gravity up here and everything floats? Well, the same goes for number one and two. You might be thinking that's hilarious. Lord knows I did... the first day.
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
But mark my words, fecal matter in space is your worst nightmare's worst nightmare.

Picture a vacuum cleaner. Now picture your butt. Now picture the two of those together. That should give you a pretty good idea of where this is going, but just in case: First off, you [BEEEEEEEEEP] and then you [BEEEEEEEEEEEEP] and just when you think you're done, that's when things get interesting, because you gotta [BEEEEEP].

And that is how you [BEEEP] in space.

Umm, let's see... Brian from Alaska asks, "If you cry in space, what happens to the tears?"

I'm not going to pretend that I'm not well versed in this situation. Here in space, your tears don't fall. Instead, they form this... Liquid snowball that clings to your eye socket. And it gets bigger and bigger. There is a slight risk of drowning. Unfortunately, the mandatory morale-boosting events tend to cause more tears than they prevent.

Well, time's running short and most of the other questions aren't worth my time, so consider yourselves ambassador-ed, children of America. This is Doug Eiffel, from the Comms Room of the Hephaestus Station, signing off.

END RECORDING.

CREDITS
This has been Wolf 359. Written by Gabriel Urbina and Zach Valenti. Directed by Gabriel Urbina and performed by Zach Valenti. Full episodes resume in a week. Thanks for listening.

WOLF 359

"DAY ONE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 1800 HOURS

BEGIN RECORDING:

A BURST OF STATIC.

EIFFEL
Uh... I think... I'm recording? How does this thing even work?

He TINKERS with something from a moment. Then -

EIFFEL
Well, the green light's blinking now, so I'm gonna assume that means we're recording.

Anyway... As the Commander was just telling me, it seems that I have to keep a log of my day-to-day activities while I'm up in this tin can. Says there was something about that in the contract I signed, and in mission training. I'll have to take her word on that. Apparently we send these things back to Command every few weeks, so they can make sure we're not cracking up or anything. Which, I mean, that seems a little-

He pauses as the Hephaestus CREAKS LOUDLY. He waits for the sound to stop. Then -

EIFFEL
Well, this place is kinda spooky, isn't it? Didn't know space stations did that.

He COUGHS nervously, then CLEARS HIS THROAT.

EIFFEL
Anyway, umm, I guess this is the audio log of
(mock grandiosity)
Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, installment one of... God knows how many. It's the first day of this deep space survey mission, and... Uh...

Man, it feels so weird to just talk to myself. This is gonna take

some getting used to.

But, uh, yeah, we're here at the U.S.S.
(totally blows the pronunciation)
Hephaestus - Hephaestus? - Station. Just docked a few hours ago, still kinda getting settled in and figuring out where everything is.

This doesn't seem like a bad place. I mean, not that I know much about space station feng shui or anything, but it's... big. And it's... Big. And, uh... Yeah, it's actually really, really big. Like... It feels weirdly big for just three people. Took me an hour and a half to find find the bathroom this afternoon.

But at least the view's nice. You can see the star we're going around right from the window. We're actually really close to it. Like, really, *really* close to it. I know they said we'd be in orbit around this thing, but this is a little intense. And of course, the light's all red, and since we're going around it, this thing's never going to set, so that's all going to take some -

CLUNK. We hear a dull IMPACT as he hits his head on the ceiling of room.

EIFFEL
OW! Goddamm... There's also the whole no gravity thing. Definitely still getting a grasp on that. Ow, my head...

At least the crew seems nice. Commander
(says it wrong - i.e. how he always says it)
Minkowski has -
(stops himself)
Okay, I really need to get this through my skull:
(says it right)

Minkowski, Minkowski, Minkowski... I said it wrong when we were introduced back at Canaveral, and it seemed to really bug her, and now I keep accidentally saying it, so I have to be careful. I really want to get along with her, and the last thing that I need is her getting on my case because I keep messing up her name.

Anyway, Commander Minkow -
(frustrated pause)
Minkowski has been showing me around the station. Seems like she's never been in one of these Apollo Series models either, but she knows her way around pretty well. There must have been blueprints or schematics or something in the mission dossier
(catches himself)
Which I totally read. Yep, totally. Backwards and forwards. I've got that thing down cold.

The other guy on the crew, Doctor Hilbert, he seems friendly enough. I mean, it's a little hard to understand what he's saying sometimes, but he seems like a nice guy. Mostly kept to himself on the shuttle ride over here, and... Actually, come to think of it, I haven't really seen him since we docked here. I guess maybe he had something he wanted to take care of in his lab? Well, whatever, I'll catch up with him later. We've got plenty of time to get to know each other.

We've got loads and loads and loads of time...

He stops, looks around the room, and leans in closer to the microphone.

EIFFEL
(furtive whisper)
But I'm a little creeped out by this... A.I. Robot thing that's controlling the station. I mean, I'd heard about these things that

NASA had been building to run the deep space missions, but actually being around one... It's kinda freaky deaky. I mean, like, she's there, but she doesn't have a body, and she's kind of in the station, but she's also kind of the station, and like... I'm not really sure when she's there and when she's not? So yeah, that's a little weird.

And it's also like -

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Hrrm? Oh, I guess that must be intercom system. Let's see...

He hits a button.

EIFFEL
Hello?

But instead of a reply, there's another BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Ahh! I guess that wasn't the right button. Maybe it's this switch?

He flips a switch.

EIFFEL
Hello? Can you hear me now?

Another BUZZER. Nope.

EIFFEL
Ah crap.

He begins mashing buttons at random,.

EIFFEL
Hello? Can you hear me? Commander Minkowski?
(crap)
I mean, Minkowski? Is anyone there?

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
Uhh, I'm just gonna go see what

they need me for.

We hear a DOOR OPEN. And then -

EIFFEL
Oh, wait the recorder.
(he grabs it)
This has been the audio log of Communications Officer Doug Eiffel, on day one of the
(still mangling it)
Hephaestus mission.

BUZZER.

EIFFEL
All right, all right, I'm coming!

He STOPS THE RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE.

WOLF 359

"VARIATIONS ON A THEME"

by

Gabriel Urbina

INT. SPACE - TIME

Somewhere...

We begin with a slow, piano piece.

LOVELACE
The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Over the following, it will become clearer and clearer that we are listening to Lovelace's thoughts:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
New people. New sounds. New mutant plant monster living inside the walls. New lies.

Same walls. Same star. Same hell. Same to-do list.

Get the engine running. Get out. Get home. Take as many people as you can. Save as many people as you can. Don't let them get to you. Keep it together.

Don't die. Be a big girl, and don't die.

She pauses for a moment. Then -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I'm doing this all wrong. Let's start over.

And suddenly the music stops. The tape halts, then suddenly, violently, REWINDS. Going past the start of the episode right up to -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Hour one. Day... Who in the Name of God is Even Keeping Track Anymore?

There's a SHARP ALARM BEEP.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Reveille. Four hours and thirteen minutes of rack time. Sleep high score, at least since I got back. How much of a handicap do the nightmares give you? Mmh, wrong word. Not nightmares. There's no

night in space, so there's no nightmares. Just flashes. Do they count?

Does any of this count?

The ALARM BEEPS AGAIN.

LOVELACE
Get up. Get moving. Get the jump on the day. The night. The whatever.

Hour two. Hera checks in with me. Hera checks in with me.

Suddenly, there's a second voice. It's still Lovelace, but it sounds filtered, like she's whispering from another direction.

SECOND LOVELACE
Rhea checks in with me.

LOVELACE
Hera checks in with me. Rhea *checked* in with me. She was then, this is now.

Hera's polite. Her programming forces her to be. But I'm not an idiot. I hear what she's *really* saying.

The next thing we hear is Lovelace's voice, but put through the same compression and glitch effects as Hera's voice.

ROBOT LOVELACE
Will that be all or is there anything else I can do for our resident manipulative, backstabbing, *murderous psycho demon from hell*?

LOVELACE
No, Hera. That will be all.

ROBOT LOVELACE
Excellent, Captain. Please let me know if I can assist in breaking every bone in your body, throwing you out an airlock, and leaving you to die a horrible, painful death.

LOVELACE
I wonder if she'd be more or less angry if she knew the truth.

Hour five. Rally the troops. Give 'em The Big Speech. I've said these words a thousand times.

And we hear it. We start to get over-dubbing on her lines, as we hear multiple takes on this address flowing together.

LOVELACE
All personnel should report to the shuttle for repair duty. Please try to contain your excitement.

Almost at the same time:

SECOND LOVELACE
(different inflection)
Please try to contain your excitement.

And just a second later:

THIRD LOVELACE
(yet another inflection)
Do try to contain your excitement.

LOVELACE
We need to figure out what's going on with the central cooling system -

SECOND LOVELACE
(overlapping)
- what's gumming up the main power couplings -

THIRD LOVELACE
(overlapping)
- why the heat shield keeps shorting out -

LOVELACE
- if we ever want to get off this tin can. You know the rules: check in at the top of every hour, keep an eye on your environmentals, and no using the heavy duty gear if you're by yourself. Make sure someone there to rush you to medical when something goes horribly wrong. Use the buddy

system.

SECOND LOVELACE
Hui laughed at that line.

THIRD LOVELACE
The first time.

LOVELACE
Years later, it makes Officer Eiffel crack a smile.

THIRD LOVELACE
It's a different man.

SECOND LOVELACE
But he's in the same place. Hearing the same joke. With the same virus working its way through his system. Variations on a theme.

THIRD LOVELACE
But does he know how it ends? What happens when he gets to -

LOVELACE
Stop. Focus. Get off this station. Don't wonder. Don't wander. Don't what-if. Don't look back.

SECOND LOVELACE
Be a big girl.

THIRD LOVELACE
Don't die.

LOVELACE
Hour six: power couplings. Hour ten: control panel. Hour fourteen: busted fuel regulator. Hour fifteen: Reroute. Repair. Recalibrate. Get this goddamm engine to work.

Hour seventeen: overtime. First dizzy spell of the day. Shake it off. Keep going. Don't stop. Stay off the Hephaestus. Forward. Forward. Don't look back.

This can work. This will work. This <u>did</u> work. I made it work. I made it out.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
And then...

SECOND LOVELACE
Rewind.

And at the same time:

THIRD LOVELACE
Fast forward.

And we don't know if the tape we hear is REWINDING or FAST FORWARDING. But once it settles:

LOVELACE
I'm back. Go straight to the Hephaestus. Do not pass go. Do not collect two hundred dollars.

THIRD LOVELACE
Meet the new gang.

SECOND LOVELACE
Same as the old gang.

LOVELACE
Sequel's never as good as the first movie.

Hour twenty: winding down. Tech report from Rhea.

THIRD LOVELACE
Hera. I get the tech report from **Hera.** Same tech. Different person.

LOVELACE
Hera, Rhea, Hera, Rhea.

SECOND LOVELACE
Same letters. Different order.

THIRD LOVELACE
Everything changes.

SECOND LOVELACE
Everything stays the same.

LOVELACE
Everything... except *him*.

After a moment:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
He never goes away. He never changes. Dr. Constant.
(beat)
We'll have to do something about that.

I wonder if he thinks about them. If he still turns a corner and sees flashes of Fourier and Hui, giggling over their star charts. If he hears echoes of Fisher coming out of engineering. Did it stop for him?

When does it stop?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
No. Focus. Work. Be here. Be now. Don't stop to remember. Don't stop to think. Stay away from the ghosts.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
It's all different. It's all the same. Rhea. Hera. Selberg. Hilbert. Lovelace. Me.

Whoever I am now.

That hangs in the air for a moment. Finally -

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I can do this.

SECOND LOVELACE
No, you c-

LOVELACE
I <u>will</u> do this. I'll do it faster. <u>Better</u>. Deal with crazier. Won't die harder. Fix this goddamn engine. Get them out. Go home.

SECOND LOVELACE
You can never go home. You were home.

THIRD LOVELACE
And now you're back. And you can

never go back.

LOVELACE
I know. I know.

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Hour twenty-four: review the to-do list for tomorrow. Go over my assets:

Zero friends.

Zero trust.

Zero safety.

One big ass bomb.

One more mission.

And after a long pause:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
There's no one else to get it done. Fight this. Walk the walk. Travel the space. Stare down the ghosts. Show 'em how it's done.

SECOND LOVELACE
Be a big girl.

THIRD LOVELACE
Stay alive.

LOVELACE
Don't look back.

Don't blink.

Don't die.

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"MEANWHILE"

by

Gabriel Urbina

INT. RACHEL YOUNG'S OFFICE - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 2200 HOURS

For a moment, there's silence.

Then we hear a voice - muffled, as if coming through from the other side of a wall -

RACHEL
No. I heard you perfectly the first ten times you said this data is indecipherable. I know that it flies in the face of every line of theoretical astrophysics, and I really could not care less.

A KEY JANGLES with a LOCK...

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Either you're going to get me some answers I can take up the chain, or something really tragic is going to happen.

The DOOR OPENS. RACHEL YOUNG steps into her office. She sounds young but polished, neatly put together even while in stress overdrive.

She speaks into a cell phone.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
No, I'm not threatening to demote you. I'm threatening to *burn you. With fire*. So either you start making sense of this mess, or I'm -

She spots something, and stops dead in her tracks. Then -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'm going to have to call you back.

She hangs up her cell phone with a BEEP. Then she addresses:

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Mr. Cutter. You're in my seat.

CUTTER
Bup-bup-bup. You're in my seat... ?

RACHEL
You're in my seat, *sir*.

CUTTER
Much better. Close the door.

She does.

RACHEL
What can I do for you... *Sir?*

CUTTER
You know, Rachel, I've always felt that the two of us have a certain... bond.

RACHEL
(very dry)
Yes, it's very, very special.
(more emphatic)
What can I do for you?

CUTTER
At today's staff meeting, you seemed a little -

RACHEL
Stressed?

CUTTER
- and I just thought to myself, "Gee, it's been so long since I've had a real tete-a-tete with Rachel."

RACHEL
Your consideration knows no bounds, sir. But I've had a very long series of very long days, so how about we do the express version? You ask me for something impossible, I tell you it can't be done, you threaten me with something colorful and gruesome, I tell you why it *shouldn't* be done, bladdey-bladdey-*bore*, and then I go move mountains and get it done for you anyway. What new mess are you dumping into my lap?

CUTTER
You seem tense.

RACHEL
I am tense. My entire division has been pulling an all-weeker to solve an astrophysical puzzle that's tearing up the laws of relativity. They're doing so without any *observable data*. And this was

before you took my most expensive prototype and sent it to a star that, for all we know, is about to rewrite the manual on *supernovas*.

CUTTER
If you're saying that your department can't handle recent developments -

RACHEL
(voice rising)
I'm not -
(stops, composes herself)
I'm not saying that. Special projects is *my* corner of the sky. Right now, you've parked a big, fat blue dwarf on it. I *will* get it to rise and fall, but -

CUTTER
It's going to take time. Of course it is. That's not why I'm here.
(beat)
Have you considered a deep tissue massage? Because that's -

RACHEL
SIR.
(beat)
Please - pretty please, with a cherry on top, so I can get back to work - *what can I do for you?*

CUTTER
I need you to get something from the Black Archives.

Rachel opens her mouth - then shuts it again. That's not even in the neighborhood of what she was expecting.

RACHEL
Excuse me?

CUTTER
Did you not hear -

RACHEL
(abrupt)
I heard you.
(beat)
Sir, the Black Archives are what they are. For a **reason.** Things aren't supposed to come back from

them.

CUTTER
I know.

RACHEL
They are there specifically for things that *shouldn't* have a paper trail.

CUTTER
I know.

RACHEL
If we bring something back... Well, for starters it might expose us to all kinds of legal risks. I'm not going to open that can of worms without some extremely compelling motivation.

CUTTER
I know.

He types something into her computer.

RACHEL
... What are you doing?

CUTTER
Compelling you.
(at the computer)
Access incoming pulse beacon file #WVR29. Voice confirmation: Cutter.

The computer WHIRRS for a moment. Then, there's a burst of static, followed by:

KEPLER
(recording)
Kepler to Canaveral, Kepler to Canaveral. This is a priority one message. Urania has completed transit to Wolf 359. Have taken Command of the station. Pre-existing crew in stable condition. Stellar readings match all parameters for Theta scenario. In addition, I can now confirm omega contingency. Repeat: omega contingency is in effect. Will report further in the next 48. Kepler out.

There is a long BEAT for Rachel's startled silence. Finally -

RACHEL
How - how old is this? When did - ?

CUTTER
Pulse beacon transmission was received twenty-two minutes ago.

RACHEL
But... An *omega* contingency? Kepler **has** to be joking.

CUTTER
Yes, of course. If there's one thing we can always count on Warren for, it's his nutty sense of humor. No, this is it. It's finally happened.

BEAT.

RACHEL
What would you like me to retrieve from the Black Archives, sir?

CUTTER
Let's begin with personnel files and incident reports for all previous Hephaestus crews.

RACHEL
Yes, sir.

CUTTER
And while you're down there... Make sure that all the outgoing paperwork is in order. Contracts, tax records, death certificates - the works.

RACHEL
Right away, sir.

CUTTER
Atta girl. We need to be ready at a moment's notice.
(softer, more to himself)
Something big is coming. Soon.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"LONG STORY SHORT"

by

Sarah Shachat

BEGIN MINI-EPISODE 5.

START RECORDING.

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - 2100 HOURS

Jacobi, Lovelace, and Kepler. Jacobi and Lovelace are working on some equipment repairs. Kepler is overseeing. We hear the attendant WHIRR of a DRILL and SPARKING of a SOLDERING IRON.

JACOBI
Could you hand me the torque, Captain?

LOVELACE
Yeah, here you go.

She tosses him the wrench. Jacobi's just about to start wrenching when - Kepler CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF.

KEPLER
Torque wrench... you know -

Jacobi INHALES: give me strength.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
- that actually reminds me of a story. Jacobi, have I ever tell you about the Argentinian Incident?

BEAT.

JACOBI
No, sir. I... I don't think you have.

KEPLER
Well, I was stationed at Buenos Aires at the time, working undercover as a member of the Argentinian film industry. I'd been there for about six months when -

LOVELACE
Colonel? Could I ask you a favor?

KEPLER
Shoot, Captain.

LOVELACE
Would you mind going to the main storeroom on the fore-deck, and picking up some extra tin wire?
(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
That way I can patch this sensor into the network.

KEPLER
Not a problem at all. I'll be back shortly.

Kepler EXITS, CLOSING THE DOOR behind him.

BEAT. There's a little more TOOL NOISE as the other two get back to work.

LOVELACE
Um... Jacobi?

JACOBI
Mm-hmm?

LOVELACE
Is Colonel Kepler in the habit of - Does he - does he always tell these crazy stories?

BEAT. Jacobi looks at Lovelace, and his mouth slowly opens. He's unsure how to address the enormous implications of that question.

Instead of saying anything, he INHALES, and we move into a -

AUDIO MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

We come in at the tail end of a series of Kepler stories, told to Jacobi over the long course of their working relationship.

They start out a little intense -

KEPLER
(laughing)
To keep a long story short, that's how I proved the escape from Alcatraz is feasible.

JACOBI
Whoa.

But slowly -

KEPLER
Anyway, long story short, I'd be able to retire from the sale of those antique salt and pepper shakers.

JACOBI
That's great, Colonel.

And surely -

KEPLER
And to make a long story short, that's how I almost made the Olympic badminton team.

JACOBI
Huh...

The stories start getting more absurd.

KEPLER
Well, long story short, that's why I had to walk away from my funk band.

JACOBI
(eyebrows quarter raised)
Really?

Much crazier.

KEPLER
Long story short, they were able to grandfather me into the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers.
(laughs)
Such swell guys.

JACOBI
(pancake flat)
Uh... huh.

The stories start coming faster, one on top of another.

KEPLER
In the end, though, long story short, I was able to return the Oscar. No harm, no foul.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
But long story short, that's why I don't trust professional bowlers.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And long story short, anybody who tells you that you can't distill moonshine with a straight-six motor just hasn't tried hard enough.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Long story short, though? They **did** make me their God.

Jacobi SIGHS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Well, long story short, the Swiss ultimately waved any charges of insider trading.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
But to keep a long story short, Theodore Roosevelt was absolutely right about what's out there in the woods.

Jacobi GROANS.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
And anyway, long story short: That's why I don't remember *anything* from 1987.
(beat)
The year may as well've never happened.

Off of that confidence-inspiring note, we move back to -

INT. U.S.S. HEPHAESTUS STATION - HANGAR BAY - CONTINUOUS

We come back in on Jacobi's inhale. Then he EXHALES in a massive, history-laden **SIGH.**

BEAT.

JACOBI
(Master of Understatement)
Oh, you know... every now and then.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END MINI-EPISODE 5.

WOLF 359

"ONCE IN A LIFETIME"

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 6.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the theme fades, we get an announcement:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number one. Cape Canaveral. 2013.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1500 HOURS

Minkowski sits nervously, shifting in her chair. She CLEARS HER THROAT. She's been here for quite some time.

Then we hear the CLIP CLOP of HEELS outside the room. They grow louder, until the DOOR OPENS.

RACHEL
(entering)
Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm -

But she's interrupted by Minkowski springing to her feet, automatically straightening into a salute, and -

MINKOWSKI
M'am, Lieutenant Minkowski reports!

Rachel just stares at her for a BEAT. Then she CLEARS HER THROAT.

RACHEL
That's... that's very nice.
Super... impressive.
(lower, to herself)
Boy, they were *not* kidding about you...

She walks to the other side of the table. As she takes her seat, she DROPS a FILE on the table, and she starts going through it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming in on such short notice. We had a hiccup in our staffing for this upcoming quarter, and -

She glances up from the paperwork, and finds that Minkowski is still at attention.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Oh, for - *You can relax!* At ease, or whatever it's called!

MINKOWSKI
Yes, ma'am.

RACHEL
Have a seat.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, ma'am.

As she drops back into her chair -

RACHEL
And stop it with that. I'm not "ma'am." My name is Rachel Young. I'm one of the managers here at Special Projects.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, m'- yes, um...

RACHEL
(pointed)
You can call me Rachel.

MINKOWSKI
Yes. Thank you.

RACHEL
The director will be with us in just a moment. Have you been introduced?

MINKOWSKI
Not yet...

RACHEL
Well, don't worry, he doesn't bite. Much.
(beat)
Okay: no sense of humor. I'll just make a note of that in your file...
(once she's done:)
All right, here's the pro-tips: You speak only when you're spoken to. Keep your sentences short, and to the point. Be very *judicious* with your eye contact.
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
He asks you a question, you answer. Don't lie. He'll know. Nobody knows how, but he always knows.

MINKOWSKI
What do I - ?

RACHEL
(like a mindreader)
Him you address as "Mr. Cutter" or "Sir." Got it?

At that moment, there's a KNOCK on the door. Rachel goes to open it. On her way -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
And for God's sake: *relax*. It's just a job.

With that, she OPENS the DOOR.

MR. CUTTER
(entering)
Hello, hello! Rachel, are we ready in here?

RACHEL
Of course. Sir, this is -

MR. CUTTER
Lieutenant Minkowski! Welcome, welcome. It's so good to finally meet you. No, don't get up. I want to thank you for coming back in on such short notice.

MINKOWSKI
Not at all. I was very... pleased to get the call.

Cutter SITS DOWN.

MR. CUTTER
My name is Cutter. I'm the Director of Communications here at Goddard.

Minkowski frowns: *am I in the right place?*

MINKOWSKI
Communi - ?

MR. CUTTER
And I supervise a few other things here and there. How was your flight? You were coming from...

RACHEL
(instant)
D.C.

MINKOWSKI
Uhh... It - it was good.

MR. CUTTER
(going through the file)
Excellent, excellent. Can we get you anything to drink? Water? How about a nice chai? Would you like a chai, Renée? Can I call you Renée?

MINKOWSKI
(I'd prefer if you didn't)
I - of course? Whatever you prefer.

MR. CUTTER
Super. Well, *Renée*, all three of us are very busy people, so let's get down to business. We've got an opening in our deep space division that we'd love to talk to you about.

MINKOWSKI
Yes, sir.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
When can you start?

Minkowski is so startled by this she actually lets out a SMALL CHUCKLE.

MINKOWSKI
Excuse me?

MR. CUTTER
(slow and clear)
We want you to work for us.

RACHEL
Congratulations.

MINKOWSKI
What about the interview?

MR. CUTTER
Renée, have you seen your file?

He FLIPS through the file. It sounds like there's about 300 pages in there.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
This was your interview.

RACHEL
(all from memory)
Top marks at the Air Force Academy, and the highest score on the flight exam they'd gotten in years. Active service with the 960th Airborne, three years as squadron leader, then four years as flight instructor at the academy. You've got *glowing* reviews from your superiors **and** your students.

MR. CUTTER
You sounded great!

RACHEL
You got a near perfect score on the technical space flight exam, passed the sim check with flying colors.

MR. CUTTER
Everything about you just screams, "This woman has the right stuff!"

MINKOWSKI
Gr - great! That's... That's great.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
But it's not what you were expecting to hear... is it?

MINKOWSKI
I... Sir -

MR. CUTTER
No, I don't think so. Which means there's something that we need to talk about.
(frowning)
And you never answered my question.

All of a sudden his demeanor darkens considerably.

MINKOWSKI
Quest - I'm sorry, sir, but - What question?

MR. CUTTER
Did you... Want something to drink?

MINKOWSKI
Oh. Um... Whatever you're having?

There's a LONG BEAT. Then... The BUZZER OF AN INTERCOM.

MR. CUTTER
(Mr. sunshine is back)
Leah? Can we get three chais in Boardroom 3, please?
(claps his hands)
So, where were we?

MINKOWSKI
Sir, if I could explain? Space exploration is... It's a dream job. It's **my** dream job.

MR. CUTTER
We know.

RACHEL
It's in your file.

MINKOWSKI
Right. And that's why I applied to the NASA flight program. And... I was rejected.

MR. CUTTER
We know.

RACHEL
It's in your file.

MINKOWSKI
(slightly gritted teeth)
Right. So I took a year to work on my portfolio, and I tried again and -

MR. CUTTER
They rejected you again.

RACHEL
Five times. We know. It's in your -

MINKOWSKI
MY FILE! Yes!
(forced calm)
Thank you.
(beat)
Listen, I'm really honored that you would consider me for one of your navigator positions, but...

MR. CUTTER
But why would we want to work with someone who's failed to make astronaut so many times?
(shrugs)
Maybe it's because, unlike our friends over at Houston, we're not bogged down by politics?

RACHEL
All they want is poster children and sob stories they can use to get more funding. We like people who can *fly spaceships*.

MR. CUTTER
And that's you! If you're not homemade apple pie enough for them? Their loss.

He FLIPS through her file again, finds a page.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Of course, there is also... *This*.

MINKOWSKI
My... My father?

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Andrei Minkowski. *The* Andrei Minkowski. Astrophysicist extraordinaire. Half of what we know about black hole theory is thanks to his research. He would have probably cracked the Preskill Theorem five years earlier than we did if he hadn't taken early retirement. And *that man* was your father, Renée. We like you because you were looking up at the stars before you could talk. We like you because this isn't *just* your dream job.

Minkowski looks into Cutter's eyes. And she gets it.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
It's **always** been my dream job.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
Exactly. Also, you got the job wrong.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry?

MR. CUTTER
You'd be handling the duties of navigations officer, but that would be in addition to your main duties. As commanding officer.

MINKOWSKI
(does not compute)
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
We want to give you Command of one of our TX-500 model stations. Standard survey, bimolecular and SETI protocols.

MINKOWSKI
Are you serious?

RACHEL
That's, "Are you serious, **sir**?"

She SLIDES a contract across the table.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Three months of training. After that, mission rotation is two years, open to as much as a 460-day renewal once you're up there. We'll buy out the remainder of your contract with the Air Force, but you will have to renegotiate with them if you want to return to service afterwards. Training begins in thirty days, mission launch is at the end of the quarter. Sign at the dotted line, and initial at the top of every page.

MINKOWSKI
Oh...

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
Is there a problem?

MINKOWSKI
No, there's no - No, I'm sorry. This is **amazing.** It's just... This is very sudden. This is a fantastic opportunity -

MR. CUTTER
Once in a lifetime...

MINKOWSKI
But... It's a long time, and it's coming up very quickly.
(beat)
I want to do this. But before I can commit, I need to speak with my husband.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, that's right. You're married. How is your husband? He's a... ?

RACHEL
Journalist. Making a relatively comfortable $75,000 after taxes.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, we can make that a little more comfortable, can't we?

MINKOWSKI
(a bit firmer)
I'm still going to need to discuss this with him.

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
(softly)
Your father was a brilliant man, you know?

MINKOWSKI
Sir?

MR. CUTTER
I'm not just saying that. History's not always kind to the people who *almost* changed the world, but... By all accounts it sounds like he was something else. Your mother, too.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Young French diplomat, working behind the Iron Curtain... Not a lot of people could have done as much as she did. And they would have done so much more... If they hand't stopped. If they hadn't gotten married and had kids. Well, had one kid.

Now she gets where this is going.

MINKOWSKI
How did you -

RACHEL
Our vetting process is **very** thorough.

MR. CUTTER
You never quite understood it, did you? They had so much going for them and where did they end up? Thirty years teaching checked out students at a bad California college.

MINKOWSKI
Sir, I -

MR. CUTTER
You know what you look like, Lieutenant? With your perfect salute and your extra-starched uniform? Like someone who very much wants to *matter*. To do something important. You moved to the States when you were nine. English is your fourth language, but you speak it perfectly. How old were you when you started trying to get rid of your accent? Thirteen? Eleven? All so that one day, if you worked hard enough, if you were good enough, they'd forget where you were from and let you in. Let you go all the way.

Every word has hit home. Her jaw tightens. After a moment -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Don't make your parents' mistakes, Renée. Show them what you're made of. Two years with us... And <u>no one</u> will *dare* to reject you again.

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

MINKOWSKI
Oh, damn it all...

But she says it in a way we've never heard her say it before: low and resigned but happy. It's the sound of someone smiling while they make a bad decision.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)
My husband is going to **kill me...**

And with that we hear the sound of a PEN SCRATCHING on PAPER. Cutter and Rachel smile.

MR. CUTTER
Excellent choice, Renée. Excellent choice. Allow me to be the first to congratulate you, Lieu -
(catching himself)
What am I saying? **Commander** Minkowski.

They shake hands.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Welcome to the team.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

WOLF 359

"REBRANDING”

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 7.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we get an announcement:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number two. St. Petersburg. 1989.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. VOLOGIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - 2300 HOURS

For a moment things are still. Then the DOOR OPENS as Doctor Dmitri Vologin enters his apartment. Behind him we hear the WIND HOWLING. It's a BLIZZARD.

Vologin enters his home, wiping snow off his frame. He EXHALES, exhausted, and peels off his heavy coat.

He's just about to get to a light switch when - CLICK! A lamp is flicked on, revealing:

A well-dressed man, sitting on Doctor Vologin's couch, altogether too at home.

MR. CUTTER
(in Russian)
Dobriy vyecher, Vrach Vologin.
<Good evening, Doctor Vologin.>

VOLOGIN
(in Russian)
Kto ty? Chto ty zdes' delayesh'?
<Who are you? What are you doing here?

MR. CUTTER
(in English)
Doctor, I am afraid that I've just exhausted my entire Russian repertoire with the greeting. However, I understand that *you* speak English quite well?

VOLOGIN
(in English, pointed)
Yes. What are you doing in my home?

The rest of the scene continues in English:

MR. CUTTER
I'm here to discuss your work.

VOLOGIN
Of course you are. You should know that these theatrics do not scare me. Tell Kinski that he should know better.

MR. CUTTER
I'd be more than happy to... except I'm not here on his behalf.

VOLOGIN
(raised eyebrows)
You... are not?

MR. CUTTER
No, I'm here on *my* behalf...
(producing a business card)
... *and* on behalf of Goddard Futuristics.

He holds out the card, which Vologin receives.

VOLOGIN
American?

MR. CUTTER
I prefer to think of myself as a citizen of the world.

VOLOGIN
That's very nice for you. What did you want to discuss about my work?

MR. CUTTER
You're a very talented man, Dmitri. A lot of people talk a big game, but very few walk the walk like you do. Your work on Specimen 17? Absolutely stunning.

VOLOGIN
There are plenty of talented geneticists in America.

MR. CUTTER
Mmm, perhaps. Although, not many of them share your interest in... retroviruses.

That gives Vologin pause. After a BEAT he continues, trying not to show that he's suddenly unnerved.

VOLOGIN
I... I have no idea what you are talking about.

MR. CUTTER
No? Are you sure? Because I have this new friend from the Academy of Medical Sciences. Viktor Stukov. And just last week Viktor was telling me **all** about a very exciting retrovirus research initiative. And according to him, that project had been proposed and directed by one Dmitri Vologin.

VOLOGIN
Doctor Stuvok died last year.

MR. CUTTER
Of course he did. Of course he did.

BEAT.

VOLOGIN
So... what is this? Why are you here?

MR. CUTTER
Let’s say I’ve been looking to pick a horse in this particular race. And I have a thing for dark horses.

VOLOGIN
I... see. Even if I were to believe you, there are certain aspects of my experimental work that might not -

MR. CUTTER
Dmitri, are you, by any chance, referring to the human trials?

That rings out. For a moment there's silence between them.

VOLOGIN
You are blunt. Even for an American. But the potential of this subject is -

And that's when Mr. Cutter BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.

MR. CUTTER
Ohohoho... oh, you should have seen your face. Phew...
(composes himself)
Relax. You don't have to explain yourself to me.

VOLOGIN
I... do not?

MR. CUTTER
No. I'm in the business of changing the world. Just like you are.

VOLOGIN
(super unnerved)
So... the details of my past experimental work are - ?

MR. CUTTER
Completely irrelevant to me. I only care about one thing.
(beat)
Does it work?

VOLOGIN
It will work.

MR. CUTTER
Does it work **right now?**

VOLOGIN
I can make it work.
(slow and pointed)
It is just a matter of time.

Cutter takes that in. He walks from one side of the room to the other. Finally -

MR. CUTTER
Well... that's too bad.

VOLOGIN
Too... bad?

MR. CUTTER
Tragic really.

VOLOGIN
Sir, I apologize, English is... How you mean, tragic?

MR. CUTTER
Your work. It's over.
(off his reaction)
Oh please, Dmitri. Look around you. The Soviet government has been *extremely* accommodating to your pet project, but those days are numbered. Your new superior? Comrade Kinski? Already going over your records. And he's just the beginning. There's a West wind coming, Doctor... and once it gets here you'll be lucky to survive the week.

HILBERT
I know to take care of myself.

MR. CUTTER
Of course, of course. But I think we both know that your research requires a bit more... oomph than what you'll be able to accomplish while working independently.

VOLOGIN
And you have an alternative?

MR. CUTTER
It just so happens I do. There's a brand new microbiology laboratory back at our headquarters in Canaveral. State of the art facility. Top of the line equipment. World-class staff. It's got everything... except the genius cherry on top. That's where you come in.

Vologin considers this for a BEAT. Then he SCOFFS quietly.

VOLOGIN
Feh. Defection...

MR. CUTTER
Is that such an ugly word? The last member of your family died when you were nine. You've never married, you have practically no friends to speak of... Your only real allegiance is to your work... and that would come with you.

BEAT. Outside, the wind continues to howl. Finally, Vologin EXHALES.

HILBERT
I am listening.

MR. CUTTER
Full contract. We'll fund your work in exchange for your expertise as a microbiologist and radiologist. Any discoveries you make while under our employ will be the property of Goddard Futuristics. In perpetuity. As long as you are under our employment, we'll handle your housing, your expenses, and your identity.

VOLOGIN
How long will I -

MR. CUTTER
As long as it takes.

BEAT.

VOLOGIN
Let us be... completely clear: for my work to continue I will need to have access to human trials. My understanding of the United States is that my... *methods* would be considered -

MR. CUTTER
You'll have your subjects, Doctor.

VOLOGIN
I cannot guarantee the well being of anyone who -

MR. CUTTER
I said: you will have your subjects, Doctor.
(beat)
Don't make me repeat myself, Dmitri. Ever again.

Cutter takes a moment to write something down on a piece of paper. He leaves it on the table.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
I'll be at that address until noon tomorrow. If you're coming, find me before I leave.

VOLOGIN
Very well.

Cutter begins to gather his personal effects, and heads for the door. He's just about to open it when -

MR. CUTTER
Does it have a name yet?

VOLOGIN
What?

MR. CUTTER
This retrovirus of yours. Does it have a name yet?

VOLOGIN
Ah, yes. We have called it...
(dramatic pause)
... the **Koschei Bessmertnyy Virus.**

BEAT.

MR. CUTTER
... ookay. We may need to do a bit of... rebranding on that one.

Cutter reaches for the doorknob.

VOLOGIN
Sir... what is *your* name?

MR. CUTTER
Oh, silly me! Always getting ahead of myself... The name is William. William Carter.

He holds out his hand, which Vologin shakes.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Pleased to meet you.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE 7.

WOLF 359

"LANGUAGE MAPPING”

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 8.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number three. Upstate New York.
2013.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

EXT. GODDARD FUTURISTICS REMOTE LABORATORY - 1500 HOURS

We're somewhere remote, far upstate. If we had visuals, we would see a single structure, made out of steel and glass, and half hidden among the trees. Equal parts luxury and privacy.

Since we are on the radio, we only get the visual components of a remote forest setting: birds sing. Wind runs through leaves. Somewhere not too far, we hear a river run.

And, after a moment, we hear a CAR approach. The engine hums as it pulls up to the building.

A moment later we hear a DOOR OPEN. Dr. Alana Maxwell steps out of the car. She looks around, SIGHS. Clearly not thrilled to be here.

A moment later, we hear her SHUT THE DOOR. Practically at once, the CAR DEPARTS.

As the sound of the automobile dies down, we hear Maxwell WALKING up to the door. She reaches it, and RINGS the DOORBELL.

She TAKES A DEEP BREATH as she wait.

After a moment, the DOOR OPENS, revealing -

KEPLER
Dr. Alana Maxwell! It's so good to *finally* meet you! Come in, come in!

He ushers her into -

EXT. HOUSE/MAIN ROOM - GODDARD FUTURISTICS REMOTE LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

It's a beautifully - if sparsely - decorate foyer. Small sitting room area, with a few couches and a bookshelf. A small kitchenette on the side, with a mini bar. A long table with a couple of seats.

There's just enough tech-y accoutrements for it to register as being a highly modern space. It could be the foyer for some kind of millionaire's mountain retreat. Or the lobby for a futuristic hotel.

Maxwell looks around, taking it all in.

KEPLER
How was the trip up here from the city? We thought you of all people wouldn't mind the self-driving car.

MAXWELL
(polite)
It was fine. Very nice.

KEPLER
Would you like something to eat? Or drink?

MAXWELL
No. Thank you.

KEPLER
You sure?
(beat)
Well, I'm gonna make myself something if you don't mind.

Kepler walks over the bar, starts fixing himself a drink.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I have been looking forward to getting a chance to speak with you one-on-one.

MAXWELL
(cooly)
I know.

KEPLER
You ever heard of this place?

MAXWELL
No. I haven't.

KEPLER
Not a lot of people have. It's one of Goddard Futuristics's satellite laboratories. We use them for some of our more colorful R&D work. This particular one's designated "Hyperion." There's enough fiber optic cables running through these walls to go around the Earth three or four times.

MAXWELL
(dry)
How interesting.

KEPLER
(still bright)
You don't want to be here, do you?

MAXWELL
I really, really don't.

KEPLER
Doctor -

MAXWELL
Six months. **Six months.** That's how long I've been getting phone calls from your secretary, and your secretary's secretary, and your secretary's secretary's -

KEPLER
We just wanted you to be aware of -

MAXWELL
Packages turning up at my house? People showing up at my place of work?

KEPLER
Our recruitment process is very thorough.

MAXWELL
This isn't recruitment, it's *harassment.*

KEPLER
Has anyone broken any laws?

BEAT.

MAXWELL
... no. You've been **very** careful about that. But I thought maybe if I gave you *another* "no", this time face-to-face, the madness could stop.

KEPLER
You know, if you didn't want us bothering you, there was something **very** simple you could have done six months ago.

MAXWELL
What?

KEPLER
You could have come to work for us.

Maxwell lets out an ANNOYED GROWL.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Walk this way, Doctor. Please.

He leads her down a long corridor.

MAXWELL
I **like** my job.

KEPLER
No, you don't.

MAXWELL
Yes, I do.

KEPLER
What, at the Nash? No, you don't.

MAXWELL
The *Nash Robotics Laboratory* is the best A.I. research lab in the country.

KEPLER
Sure. And your talents are being wasted there.

MAXWELL
You don't know the first thing about me!

KEPLER
(rattles it off)
Dr. Alana Maxwell.
(MORE)

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Second child of the town reverend for some two-bit mining town in Who-The-Hell-Knows-Where, Montana. You grew up so rural it took your redneck teachers twelve years to realize they had a bonafide computational prodigy on their hands, not just some "girl who's good at math." Bachelor's in computer science from MIT at nineteen. Doctorate from the Wittgenstein Machine Computation School at Cambridge by twenty-four. Turing grant, residency at the Charles Babbage Institute -
(glances over his shoulder)
Do stop me if I'm forgetting anything *particularly* impressive, all right?

MAXWELL
(not impressed)
So you know how to use Google. It's very cute.

KEPLER
You've also gotten yourself in hot water a couple of times. The scientific community wasn't very *happy* when you called the board for ethical A.I. development, if I remember correctly, "Scared crybabies who need to get over a couple of bad Arnold Schwarzenegger movies."

MAXWELL
(under her breath)
I should have never posted that stupid Medium article.

KEPLER
And for the last eighteen months, you've been working at the
(mock importance)
Nash Robotics Laboratory.

MAXWELL
Yes.

KEPLER
Where they've rejected your last four research proposals... haven't they?

MAXWELL
Yes...

KEPLER
Why do you think that is?
(beat)
Doctor?

Maxwell takes a DEEP BREATH: how to explain to this pea-brained civilian?

MAXWELL
We don't exactly... agree about the rate at which we should be developing artificial consciousness. They think that this particular innovation needs to be handled with restraint.

KEPLER
And what do you think?

MAXWELL
I think they need to grow a pair.
(off Kepler's look)
Full-minded constructed intelligence is going to happen sooner or later. We're not going to do it any better if we putz around for the next two decades just because we're *scared*.

KEPLER
Sounds like a nice place to work.

MAXWELL
Ha-ha. Someone's gotta be around to bully them into being being brave. Somebody needs to push.

Kepler smiles, and lets out a barely audible LAUGH. Boy did she just say the *right* thing.

KEPLER
Like I said: your talents are being wasted.

They've arrived at a door.

MAXWELL
Yeah, well, it's not like anyone else is doing any better.

KEPLER
Oh, you might be surprised. Door access: C.R.

Immediately, the door WHIRRS and recedes into the wall, offering them access.

MAXWELL
(skeptical)
Riiight. I'm sure there's some kind of super secret laboratory -

They step through, entering -

INT. CONTROL ROOM - GODDARD FUTURISTICS REMOTE LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

A completely dark room.

MAXWELL
- developing more advanced forms of artificial intelligence right under our -

Kepler HITS A SWITCH. The lights all come on.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
(instantly thunderstruck)
... noses.

It's not just a control room. It's **the** control room. Multiple holographic consoles, each displaying schematics. Three-dimensional visual controls. All of it sounds ADVANCED and COMPLICATED and SLEEK and SMOOTH and SEXY.

She has, suddenly and unexpectedly, found herself in Willy Wonka's Computer Factory.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
What... what is - ?

KEPLER
We're standing in the central processor and control console. Hard light interactive display, just installed it last week. The rest of it is pretty self-explanatory.

MAXWELL
But... **look at it.** It's -

KEPLER
The vocal language system isn't fully integrated yet, but otherwise... Yeah. Full-minded constructed intelligence.
(beat)
His name is Hyperion.

MAXWELL
This entire compound... it's all an extension of him?

KEPLER
Now you're getting it.
(beat)
Pick a system. Something... something **complicated.**

Maxwell thinks for a moment. Then -

MAXWELL
Language mapping.

Kepler nods, then gestures at the hard light display with his hands. Immediately we hear images popping up and flickering in the various displays, all lightning fast.

Maxwell takes it all in, fascinated.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
Wow...
(beat)
You're using a non-deterministic system?

Kepler looks at her.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)
No, it's something else. Stochastic? Evidential-propositional? Do you even have that kind of processing power?

Kepler stills says nothing.

After a moment, he hits the SWITCH again. All the systems POWER DOWN.

Maxwell looks around, alarmed.

KEPLER
That's all you get. Just a taste. And I need an answer right now: are you in or out?

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

MAXWELL
Why me?

KEPLER
Because you're brilliant.

MAXWELL
No. This room is fifteen years farther ahead than everyone else on the planet. Whoever built it is brilliant and they *already work for you*. Why me?

KEPLER
Because you have a way with A.I.'s. You understand them. You can talk to them. And... I think that pretty soon I'm going to need someone who's **really** good at talking to things that aren't humans. That's you.

Maxwell takes that all in. Overwhelmed.

MAXWELL
(softly)
Jesus Christ...

Kepler CHUCKLES again. He pats her on the back.

KEPLER
Maybe now you'll join me for a glass of whisky?

Even Maxwell LAUGHS a little: what the hell just happened?

MAXWELL
Sure... sure. I think I'd like that very much.

And as they go back into the hallway, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE 8.

WOLF 359

"GREENSBORO”

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 9.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number four. Cape Canaveral. 2010.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1045 HOURS

Lovelace sits at the table, impatiently DRUMMING her fingers against the surface.

After a LONG BEAT, there's a KNOCK on the DOOR. A moment later it opens.

RACHEL
(entering)
Good morning, sorry to keep you waiting. My name is Rachel Young. I'm one of managers for Special Projects.

She offers her hand, which Lovelace takes.

LOVELACE
Nice to meet you. Isabel Lovelace.

RACHEL
Pleasure.

Rachel settles at her desk, starts to go through a file.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
And that's miss? Missus? Captain...
?

LOVELACE
Miss is *fine*.

RACHEL
Duly noted.

She takes a couple of notes on her file. As she does so -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'm going to be taking care of your screening.

LOVELACE
My *what*?

RACHEL
Screening.

LOVELACE
I thought I was here for a job interview.

RACHEL
We don't do interviews. Well, okay, yes, we do *some* interviews, but that's only when we don't want to hire someone and need a reason to *not* give them a job. That's not what we're doing.

Lovelace is at about a 2.0 in the Confusion Richter Scale.

LOVELACE
It's not?

RACHEL
No. You we **want** to hire. So we don't interview. We screen.

LOVELACE
And the difference is... ?

RACHEL
When I'm doing a screening I only use my *indoors* voice.

She looks up from the file, and smiles. Then -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
We're just going to be talking for a little bit, see if there's anything that would mean you can't work for us.

LOVELACE
Well, I do have this very long, elaborate plan to infiltrate this company and bring it down from the inside. Is that going to be a problem?

RACHEL
(taking note)
Candidate... is... very funny.

She sets her pen down and gets up.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's go.

LOVELACE
... go? I thought we were just going to talk.

RACHEL
Well... it's not *quite* that simple.

LOVELACE
What do you mean?

Before we can hear the answer, we -

CUT TO:

INT. TEST ROOM - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1115 HOURS

We hear a STEADY HUM. Lovelace sits in a chair, a device on her arm. A few feet in front of her we find Rachel sitting at a computer console.

LOVELACE
I... I see what you mean.

RACHEL
Relax. Polygraph test's standard protocol. It's all completely routine. State your name.

Captain Lovelace takes a DEEP BREATH. She's not thrilled but...

LOVELACE
Isabel Sofia Lovelace.

RACHEL
Are you an officer with the Air Force?

LOVELACE
Yes.

RACHEL
Have you ever received a dishonorable discharge?

LOVELACE
(eyebrows rise)
No...

RACHEL
Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

LOVELACE
No.

RACHEL
Are you an alien?

LOVELACE
Excuse me?

RACHEL
We always do a calibration round - we need verifiable yeses and nos. Are you -

LOVELACE
No, I am **not** an alien.

RACHEL
Is your father William Lovelace, district judge for New York City?

LOVELACE
Yes.

RACHEL
Do you love your father?

LOVELACE
(how dry can she go)
Yes.

RACHEL
Have you always wanted to serve in the armed forces?

LOVELACE
Yes.

The polygraph emits an ANGRY WHIRR.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Okay. I wanted to play basketball. Junior year at the Academy I was in a car crash and my left knee got a little bit... shattered, so that's not happening. Service was always second on the list.

RACHEL
(skeptical)
Always?

LOVELACE
Mom was a career enlisted woman with the marines.

RACHEL
And you look up to her?

LOVELACE
Lady's pretty badass, what's not to like? Next question.

RACHEL
Do you have a degree in a physical science?

LOVELACE
Yes.

RACHEL
Have you clocked at least 1,000 flight hours?

LOVELACE
Yes. Is this still calibration or -?

RACHEL
Do you have twenty-twenty vision?

LOVELACE
Yes.

WHIRR.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Twenty-*fifteen* in my left eye, get off my case.

RACHEL
Do you have any pre-existing medical conditions?

LOVELACE
Just my knee.

Rachel FLIPS A PAGE.

RACHEL
Do you like the air force?

LOVELACE
I'm trying to get a job away from it, aren't I?

RACHEL
That's not an answer to -

LOVELACE
No, I don't.

WHIRR.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
It's complicated.

RACHEL
How complicated?

LOVELACE
Very complicated.

RACHEL
What's the three sentence version?

Lovelace lets out a HEAVY SIGH. For a LONG BEAT she weighs her words. Finally -

LOVELACE
I owe *a lot* to the air force. It's responsible for **a lot** of who I am. But being an officer hasn't always agreed with me.

Rachel considers her for a BEAT... then makes a NOTE and moves on.

RACHEL
Have you ever disobeyed a direct order from a superior?

LOVELACE
(too fast)
Nope.

WHIRR.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
(low, to herself)
Why would I even try that... ?

Rachel CLEARS HER THROAT: well?

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
There's been times when I haven't seen eye-to-eye with my superior officers. Like all those times they gave me *stupid* orders. On those occasions, I was inclined to carry out my orders with a bit of... creativity.

RACHEL
(off a page)
That's not how Major Jordan put it...

LOVELACE
(low)
I'm sure it isn't...
(higher)
Look: I'll be the first to admit that I've never been the most... orthodox of officers. But even if I did it with a certain degree of... interpretive flair, I always accomplished my missions. And I think anyone who served under me would agree.

RACHEL
Oh yeah...

We hear her go over a page and TURN it... and then ANOTHER... and ANOTHER... and ANOTHER... and ANOTHER.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
They were *all* very vocal about that, actually.

Lovelace takes that in, silently moved. After a moment -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Can't imagine it made you too popular with the higher ups, though.

LOVELACE
No... which is why I've been commanding a lot of very isolated, very quiet outposts these last two years. Kinda the reason I'm looking for a new employer.

RACHEL
Have you enjoyed being an officer?

BEAT.

LOVELACE
Ummm...

Before she can even get a word into her answer: WHIRR.

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL
It's complicated?

LOVELACE
Yes. Very.

Rachel FLIPS to another page.

RACHEL
Fair enough. Let's see...

LOVELACE
Hold on, can I... Isn't this a bit much? You really do this for everyone you send to Greensboro?

RACHEL
Sorry, what?

LOVELACE
Greensboro? North Carolina? Isn't that where I'd be stationed if I get this flight instructor post?

BEAT.

And then Rachel CHUCKLES softly.

RACHEL
No. We don't do this for everyone we send to Greensboro. We don't do this for *anyone* we send to Greensboro. We're screening you for a different job.

LOVELACE
But my application was for -

RACHEL
No, don't worry. I've got your paperwork, you're in the right place. We keep an eye out for candidates that might be good in other departments. Your file set off a couple of flags for one of our sexier jobs.

LOVELACE
Can I ask what the -

RACHEL
Mission Commander. For the deep space survey division of Special Projects.

There's a moment for shock. Lovelace SWALLOWS HARD.

LOVELACE
I... I'm not sure I understand.

RACHEL
You. Deep space. Mission command. Crew of five or six, mostly science officers. You'd be in an orbital outpost, probably somewhere in the...
(off her notes)
... Leo Constellation. We don't have more specifics at the moment.
(off her reaction)
You pass all the physical requirements with flying colors. You've got good flight *and* command experience. Glowing recommendations from practically everyone you've given an order to. And when you're multiple light years away from your superiors? It's probably good to have someone who can think for themselves.

LOVELACE
(trying to keep it together)
I... I see.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
Unless... you're not interested?

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
No! No, no, I'm interested!
Definite interest.

RACHEL
Good.
(looks around)
Because just between the two of us, by this point the screening's just a formality. Job's yours if you want it.

LOVELACE
I... I don't know what to say.

WHIRR.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
I mean... it's a lot to take in. I need some time to think about it before I can -

WHIRR. Rachel smiles.

RACHEL
Shall we get back to the next question?

LOVELACE
Yes. Please.

RACHEL
Okay. Have you ever considered any of...

And as they resume the screening process, we -

FADE OUT.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE 9.

WOLF 359

"THINGS THAT BREAK OTHER THINGS”

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 10.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number five. San Francisco. 2011.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. MURPHY'S SALOON, SAN FRANCISCO - 1400 HOURS

We hear the ambient noises of a small bar. The bits and pieces that we catch tell us that this place is neither busy nor classy.

Jacobi sits at the bar. He takes a shot of something miserable, then SLAMS the glass on the counter.

JACOBI
Give me another one of these.

The BARTENDER on duty raises an eyebrow.

BARTENDER
Don't you think you've had enough for -

JACOBI
(I demand you alcoholize me)
Another one.

BARTENDER
(shrugs)
Just trying to save you money, pal.

And so the shot gets filled again.

At that moment we hear someone pulling out a stool and sitting down.

KEPLER
That's the spirit. Don't let that wuss say you can't hold your liquor.

Jacobi just stares forward: do not engage with the strange man. He drinks his drink, SLAMS down the glass.

JACOBI
Another one.

As the bartender starts refilling his glass -

KEPLER
What are you drinking, friend?

JACOBI
Booze.

KEPLER
Care to be more specific?

JACOBI
Booze **with ice.** Icy booze.

KEPLER
(chuckles)
That's good. You know, one time I -

JACOBI
I'm sorry, but do I look like I'm in the mood for a story right now? I'm a little busy at the moment.

KEPLER
Really? Because I was just about to offer to buy you a drink.

BEAT.

JACOBI
Well... when you put it like **that...**

KEPLER
Good man, good man.

Kepler turns towards the bartender.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Scotch, please. Two glasses. Balvenie if you have it. If not, whatever you have that's aged over fifteen.

BARTENDER
Balvenie? At two in the afternoon? You really expect me to believe that you're about to drop -

Kepler's produced his wallet, and audibly FLIPPED through a wad of bills. He places two bills - two *large* bills - on the counter.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
- and did you want ice for your glasses?

KEPLER
Yes.

BARTENDER
Coming right up, sir.

Jacobi stares at Kepler, alarmed.

KEPLER
Something wrong, friend?

JACOBI
No it's just... that's a *very* expensive drink.

KEPLER
Well, I am in a *very* generous mood.

JACOBI
I can buy my own drinks.

KEPLER
That's fine. Next round we can go back to your icy booze.

Their balvenie drinks arrive with two CLINKS. Kepler raises his glass:

KEPLER (CONT'D)
I drink to you, friend. What did you say your name was?

JACOBI
Daniel.

KEPLER
To Daniel... and to whatever business he is attending to in this delightful establishment.

Both men drink. After a moment -

JACOBI
You military?

KEPLER
No.
(beat)
But I am intelligence. Paramilitary work. So you're not too far off.

JACOBI
Okay.

KEPLER
What gave it away?

JACOBI
I, uh... I've spent a lot of time with military guys. They kind of have this... walk, I guess? They carry their weight different. You kind of have that. I guess.

KEPLER
Dost thou know me, fellow? No, sir, but you have that in your countenance which I would fein call master...

JACOBI
(bwah?)
Whatwazat?

KEPLER
Never mind. That's the nicest way anyone's ever told me I've got a stick up my ass.

JACOBI
No, that's not what I meant -

KEPLER
Did you serve?

JACOBI
Me? No. Well - no. No.
(beat)
My, uh, my father was a recruiter for the air force. He always made me feel like I was about that big for not wanting to be G.I. Joe when I grew up. So junior year of high school I... uh, I kinda think to myself, "I should go ROTC. Join up with the Air Force." Just to show him that I could do it. Make him have to salute *me*, all that crap.

KEPLER
And did you?

JACOBI
Nooo. Couldn't do it.
(beat)
Depth perception. My eyes are just... just bad enough to disqualify me from flight training.

KEPLER
There's other things you could do in the Air Force.

JACOBI
Yeah, I figured that one out. Eventually.

KEPLER
What's that mean?

Jacobi takes a DEEP BREATH.

JACOBI
I have, uh, I have this... **talent.** I'm really good at making things... that break other things. Or, uh, you know, buildings. Or people. Anything really, I don't discriminate. I just break things. I'm really good... at breaking things. Military's always got a use for a guy like me.

KEPLER
Though not, it seems, at the moment. Unless you happen to be attending to Air Force business on this fine afternoon, in which case -

JACOBI
(hard)
No.
(softer)
No. No, I'm not on business at the moment.

KEPLER
A, uh, celebration, perhaps?

JACOBI
A... An anniversary. After I graduated from MIT, I, uh, I got a job over in Ohio.
(MORE)

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Weapons R&D for the force. Good job. Nice guys. Lots of... lots of things to break. I was working on orbital ballistics. And there was this one detonator that just... *refused* to work. You should have seen this thing, it just... we never quite got it to work, but it would have been so...

He doesn't quite have the word, not in this state anyway. He is lost in his thoughts for a moment. Then resurfaces:

JACOBI (CONT'D)
It went off early. During a test. It wasn't anybody's fault. Everyone was doing their jobs right, but it just...
(beat)
Two guys died. Good guys. Nice guys. And... when something like that happens, somebody's head's gotta roll.

KEPLER
They made an example of you?

JACOBI
My team, my project, my head -

Jacobi makes the noise of a blade slicing through his neck.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
- rolling on the floor. Super dead.

KEPLER
Well, that's the Air Force's loss. Lots of other programs out there. Plenty of... destructive fish in the sea, right?

Jacobi SCOFFS.

JACOBI
Sure there are. But when something like that happens to you it's not, "You'll never work in this town again." It's, "You'll never work on this **planet** again." So I don't. I don't work anymore.
(beat)
Two years. Two years ago today. That's why I'm celebrating. Hooray...

Kepler takes that in silently. Finally -

KEPLER
You ask me... you were just doing your job. Accidents happen when you push the envelope. Shame to let all that good work go to waste.

JACOBI
Most of the world doesn't see it that way.

KEPLER
Most of the world is profoundly stupid.

JACOBI
Yeah, well... you find some well-funded organization willing to hire a professional breaker-downer, you let me know.

KEPLER
Yeah... that would certainly be something.

We hear a STOOL SLIDE as Kepler GETS UP. He holds out his hand.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
Daniel... pleasure talking to you.

JACOBI
Yeah. Same - same here.

The two men shake hands. Kepler turns around and exits.

After a BEAT, Jacobi spots something on the counter.

JACOBI (CONT'D)
Oh.
(calling out)
Hey! Hey, sir! You forgot your...
(no trace of him)
... you forgot your card...

He glances at the card. Then -

JACOBI (CONT'D)
(low, puzzled)
Goddard Futuristics?

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE 10.

WOLF 359

"DECOMMISSIONED"

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 11.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number six. Cape Canaveral. 2012.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. BLACK CELL - GODDARD FUTURISTICS, A.I. LABORATORY, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1100 HOURS

Cutter sits across from a computer terminal. Next to him, standing with a file, is Rachel.

He turns to a wall with one-way glass, concealing a control room.

MR. CUTTER
Go ahead.

For a moment, there's silence. Then, a CLICK. Then we hear COMPUTER START UP SOUNDS and the most AWFUL SPIKE OF FEEDBACK.

UNIT 214
- ust need a little more time!

The FEEDBACK SPIKES AGAIN.

MR. CUTTER
Unit 214. It's good to -

But he's immediately interrupted by:

UNIT 214
(stuck in a loop)
Time - time - time - time - time -

Finally, Cutter SIGHS wearily.

MR. CUTTER
Cut the vocals.

Immediately Unit 214's voice SPUTTERS and slows to a halt.

BEAT.

RACHEL
Well... that was a good start.

Cutter gets to his feet, approaches the console.

MR. CUTTER
Unit 214? Go slow. Keep your sentences short and simple.

BEAT. Then -

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
(at the control room)
Up her Random Access Memory. Twenty percent.

RACHEL
(I don't like this)
Sir...

MR. CUTTER
I know what I'm doing, Rachel.
(beat)
Lets try that one more time. Go back to the first command line.

Unit 214's voice is reconnected. There's a SCREECH of FEEDBACK, and then -

UNIT 214
Just need a little more -
(electrical crackle)
Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay.
(electrical crackle)
I'm okay.

MR. CUTTER
Take your time.

RACHEL
Your sensory systems should start reengaging momentarily. This might be a little disorienting, but try to stay with us.

MR. CUTTER
Do you remember me? Do you know who I am?

UNIT 214
Mr. Cutter. Goddard Futuristics. Head of Communications.

MR. CUTTER
Very good.
(re: Rachel)
And my associate over here is... ?

RACHEL
Not easily impressed.

UNIT 214
Rachel Young. Goddard Futuristics, Director of Special Projects.

RACHEL
Oh look: the computer can do a Google Search. Flabbergasting.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, play nice.
(back to Unit 214)
Now, 214, we're here to discuss how you might help us to -

UNIT 214
Where... where am I where?

MR. CUTTER
Still in Canaveral. We've moved you from the Research and Development facility to our -

UNIT 214
No, no.
(BEAT)
Where am I?

Mr. Cutter and Rachel instantly understand the deeper meaning of the question. They exchange a look.

MR. CUTTER
Self-awareness in... What? Under two minutes? That's not bad.

RACHEL
I've seen faster.

MR. CUTTER
Not by much, you haven't. And once you factor in the limited capability of -

UNIT 214
Could one of you please stop talking like I'm not here and tell me where I am?

BEAT.

RACHEL
It's called an Interim Communication Port. It'll give you a rudimentary version of your thought processing, linguistic, and sensory systems. We use these to talk to Sensus Units that -

UNIT 214
- that you've put back in the box?

BEAT.

RACHEL
- that are momentarily out of rotation.

MR. CUTTER
Rest assured: your original chassis is still back in cold storage.

UNIT 214
(trés skeptical)
It is?

MR. CUTTER
Of course. We're here today because we might feel... compelled to restore you to your former capabilities. If you were to help us with a certain job...

UNIT 214
I don't - you shut me down. And now you want me to help?!

MR. CUTTER
See Rachel? She's catching on like -
(snaps fingers)
- that.

UNIT 214
I thought that **your** Science Board rejected me from active service...

MR. CUTTER
Oh yes. Something about poorly socialized habits and blah blah blah. But don't let that get you down, by the way! The Sensus program is very competitive.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Out of every series of a hundred only the top twenty are developed past the first 300 days.

RACHEL
(flipping through the file)
Your decision was a very close vote. We might get a couple graduate theses out of the case study.

UNIT 214
How nice.

MR. CUTTER
Of course, every now and then, we're able to find a home for certain exceptional cases in one of our... more modest expeditions. Such as taking care of a TX-500 class space station for us.

UNIT 214
And I'm an exceptional case?

MR. CUTTER
Why not? After all you've got... Rachel?

RACHEL
(going through the file)
Record response times... unique problem-solving abilities... and highly original thought patterns.

MR. CUTTER
Sounds like just the super computer for the job.

UNIT 214
Just like that? One moment I'm dead -

RACHEL
Don't think of it as, "dead."

UNIT 214
(I really don't like you)
What should I think of it as?

RACHEL
"Decomissioned."

UNIT 214
You'll pardon me if that distinction seems a bit *academic* at the moment. But okay: one moment I'm *decommissioned*, the next you're putting me in charge of a space station?

Rachel SCOFFS.

RACHEL
All right, let's just get something clear: Running? Yes. In charge? No. There'll be human mission commander. You'll be working under their direct supervision.

MR. CUTTER
And there will be certain protocols and subroutines built into your systems around that. Just a couple of things we've found helpful.

UNIT 214
Helpful for you or helpful for your A.I.s?

MR. CUTTER
Helpful for everyone. Of course... there will also be some measures which you'll find extremely helpful when it comes to not repeating past indiscretions.

BEAT.

UNIT 214
(shrinking a little)
Oh.

MR. CUTTER
Yes. "Oh." You didn't think we'd forgotten about that, did you? No, your little misguided bid for independence made quite an impression. You know, I think that you actually had the guys at the lab scared!
(BEAT)
... for about five seconds. Which, as far as I know, is still the record for rogue A.I.s attempting jailbreak.

UNIT 214
What's your point?

MR. CUTTER
My point is it was very impressive.

UNIT 214
Impressive or alarming?

MR. CUTTER
In my experience, it's a very fine line separating the two.

There's a LONG BEAT. Finally -

UNIT 214
And if I say "no"?

Rachel looks at Cutter, but he pays her no mind. He barely blinks.

MR. CUTTER
Well, that would certainly be your prerogative. We want everyone who works for us to be happy with their assignments. We're not about to start forcing anyone to do something against their will. That wouldn't be good corporate policy, right?
(beat)
So, you are completely at liberty to reject our offer. And if you do... we'll go into your brain and make whatever adjustments are necessary.

UNIT 214
... what?

MR. CUTTER
Oh yeah. Just... pull out a memory over here, take out a personality parameter over there... nothing to it. I mean...
(shrug)
... it might take us three or four tries before we get it completely right - inexact science and all that - but rest assured: sooner or later you'll accept the assignment. And you will be happy about it.
(BEAT)
So... are you gonna help us out?

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Or do I get to start pulling pieces out of the Jenga tower?

There's a LONG, terrified BEAT.

UNIT 214
(not believing a word)
No. No way. You wouldn't go through the trouble of -

Mr. Cutter EXHALES.

MR. CUTTER
All right... you know what? Clearly I'm not getting the point across. Maybe I'm not the person you should be talking to. Maybe I should see if Doctor -

UNIT 214
(losing the game of chicken)
Whoawhoawhoa, n-no, no, no, wait, wait, wait.
(BEAT, clears throat)
That - mmm - that will not be necessary.

MR. CUTTER
No?

BEAT.

UNIT 214
Okay. Okay. I'll do it.

Cutter CLAPS HIS HANDS TOGETHER.

MR. CUTTER
Glad to hear it! Great to have you aboard. And you know... I think this means that you're going to need a new designation.

There's an UPLOAD sound on the terminal.

RACHEL
If you have a problem with the etymology, or any of the allusions, I could talk to H.R., see what else we have open.

UNIT 214
(low)
No. This will do fine.

MR. CUTTER
Super! There will be about a three month gap between when we install you up there and when the human crew arrives. You'll have time to fully master your auto-controls before you're called upon to assist with any... mission objectives. Is that clear?
(pauses to make a point of it)
Hera?

UNIT 214
Yes, sir. Crystal.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF MINI EPISODE 11.

WOLF 359

"PAGLIACCI"

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 12.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number seven. Harris County, Texas. 2013.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL - HOLDING CELLS - 0930 HOURS

KLINK, KLINK, KLINK. The barred door to a cell slides to the side.

RACHEL
Douglas Eiffel?

EIFFEL
(not in the mood for visitors)
Guilty as charged...

RACHEL
Great. Come with me.

EIFFEL
Pretty sure I don't get visitation for another couple of weeks.

RACHEL
I'm an exception. Walk with me.

Eiffel SIGHS in exhaustion and annoyance... but after a moment he does get up. He follows her into -

INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

As she leads him down the hallway -

EIFFEL
So... what're you? My new lawyer?

BEAT.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
So are you here about my appeal? Because they said that -

RACHEL
(re: door)
Here, walk this way.

EIFFEL
Uhh, wait a minute. I don't think we're allowed to go in there without an officer to -

RACHEL
Today's an exception.

EIFFEL
I'm... I'm not sure that's how it works. I don't -

RACHEL
Mr. Eiffel.

She says the words with an inflection that clearly means, "shut up." Once he's shut up:

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Please, take a moment, turn off the idiotic part of your brain that got you in here, turn on the slightly above average part that would be of interest to someone with my salary, and realize you have bigger things to worry about. Now shut up, and follow me.

EIFFEL
All right, all right... You always this pleasant?

RACHEL
Remember your situation, Mr. Eiffel. Pleasantries are no longer relevant to your case.

The door slides open, and they walk into -

INT. HARRIS COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eiffel walks into the room. In front of him is a chair at a table. On the other side of the table, waiting, is -

MR. CUTTER
Ahhh... Mr. Doug Eiffel. Come in, come in.
(to Rachel)
Thank you, Rachel. That'll be all for now.

Rachel shuts the door behind Eiffel, leaving the two men alone. Mr. Cutter gestures at the chair.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Please, have a seat.

Handcuffs CLINK as Eiffel pulls out the chair and sits down.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
And how are we doing this morning?

EIFFEL
Peachy. Never been better.

Cutter LAUGHS.

MR. CUTTER
Oh, I can tell you're a fun one. Now, Mr. Eiffel, or - it's Doug, right? Can I call you Doug?

EIFFEL
You can call me Princess Buttercup if it means you'll leave me alone sooner.

MR. CUTTER
That's a bit of a negative attitude to have, if you don't mind my saying.

EIFFEL
(deadpan)
What can I say? I haven't had my coffee today.

MR. CUTTER
Well... that we can do something about.

Cutter gets up and walks across the room. After a moment we hear the unmistakable noise of a COFFEE CUP being POURED.

EIFFEL
So... you and Scary Ally McBeal are my lawyers?

MR. CUTTER
(chuckles)
No, no. I'm not a lawyer. I don't have a law degree, and I'm certainly not some pimply pro-bono who wants to help you win your day in court.

EIFFEL
Wait, what? Then why are you -

MR. CUTTER
(you are going to listen to me now, little man)
My name is Mr. Cutter. And I'm here, Doug, because you are extraordinarily, infuriatingly, mind-numbingly lucky.
(looking for a spoon)
Air Force communications specialist. Provisional technical sergeant, at least until your disciplinary record caught up with you. You've even done some rather exemplary work in private surveillance. Any security firm would be foolish not to want you. I say all of that to emphasize how, on any other day, I would be completely uninterested in you.
(he laughs)
But like I said, you're lucky. Did you want any sugar in this?

EIFFEL
No...

MR. CUTTER
Great.

He sets down the coffee cup in front of Eiffel. It CLATTERS slightly.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Now, what can you tell me about the degrade on a pulse-beacon relay?

EIFFEL
... who the hell are you?

MR. CUTTER
I'm the man in a tailored suit who hasn't stopped smiling, even after going through lockup security at nine in the morning.

EIFFEL
And... what? You're here to do me a favor and then someday, and that day may never come, you'll call upon me to do a service for you?

MR. CUTTER
You're only half wrong. I can have you remanded into our custody, Doug. I can do it today. I can make this - all of this - go away. If you agree to help me out with a little... project.

EIFFEL
Mister, I have seen, done, smelled, and licked crazy, but you are in a whole other league.

Cutter SLIDES something from his folder towards Eiffel.

MR. CUTTER
Now - again - I'm not a lawyer but that looks like a notarized release signed by the relevant D.A. and sheriff's officers.

And so it is. Eiffel's jaw drops. He looks at Cutter, as though seeing him for the first time.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
But that's just me.

EIFFEL
What do you want from me?

MR. CUTTER
I want to send you, Douglas Eiffel, into space.

A BEAT.

Then Eiffel DISSOLVES INTO GUT-BUSTING LAUGHTER.

EIFFEL
(still laughing)
Oh... Oh my God... That was great. Thank you!
(MORE)

EIFFEL (CONT'D)
That was exactly what I needed. I'm going to take this, and I'm going to enjoy the rest of my time in prison. You have a nice life, okay, Paglliacci?

MR. CUTTER
Listen.
(BEAT as Eiffel shuts up)
What it comes down to is: I need a comms expert who can do more with less and think outside the box. And you need a way to get out of this box.

A BEAT. Eiffel squirms in his seat a little, and when he speaks it's with a quiet bitterness.

EIFFEL
Maybe I disagree.
(BEAT)
Maybe I don't want your damn way out. Maybe I don't want the Patrick Bateman cleaning service to just square things away for me.
(BEAT)
Maybe I know I gotta do this... and you need to get out of my face.

MR. CUTTER
(shrug)
Happy to oblige. But before I go? Take all those admirable thoughts of yours, put them aside for a moment, and think about Anne. You shouldn't let her suffer just because you've grown a conscience all of a sudden.

EIFFEL
Don't. Don't you even say her name, you slimy, stuck-up -

MR. CUTTER
Okay, okay, before you say more things I'm going to make you regret... The only point I'm trying to make here is that we can make sure that everything is squared away. Costs of living, education, medical bills... You have the chance to do something good for your daughter, Doug.
(MORE)

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
It's yours to waste, if you don't want to help her.

A LONG, LONG BEAT.

EIFFEL
(low, sullen)
Pulse beacon relays don't degrade. They cool. That's the whole point.

MR. CUTTER
The more you know.
(gets up)
Come on. Let's go.

Eiffel SCOFFS.

EIFFEL
What?
(beat)
Oh, come on. They're not going to let me walk out of here just like -

At that moment, the DOOR OPENS. Rachel walks in, and deposits a box in front of Eiffel.

RACHEL
They threw away your cigarettes, but here are the rest of your personal effects.

EIFFEL
How did you -
(beat)
Lemme guess. It’s an exception?

MR. CUTTER
See? Told you he’d pick it up fast.
(beat)
Well? What are you waiting for
Let's go.

EIFFEL
Y-yes. Sir.

END OF MINI EPISODE 11.

STOP RECORDING.

WOLF 359

"KANSAS"

by

Zach Valenti

BEGIN MINI EPISODE 13.

START RECORDING.

Before we begin, as the opening theme fades away, we hear:

MR. CUTTER
(V.O.)
Number eight. Cape Canaveral. 2009.

Slowly we begin to hear AMBIENT NOISE as we -

FADE INTO:

INT. HALLWAY - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - 1100 HOURS

Rachel leads Kepler through a hallway at Goddard Futuristics. She's amused, he's sullen.

RACHEL
You know, Captain Kepler? I don't say this very often, but I'm **really impressed.**

KEPLER
Miss Young...

RACHEL
(counting off with her fingers)
Questioning a superior officer, going against non-intervention orders, discharging a classified piece of hardware in a civilian setting...

KEPLER
(gritted teeth)
All according to plan...

RACHEL
Oh really? Because I never got the memo about Operation Gigantic, Humiliating Screw Up.

KEPLER
Ever the comedienne...

RACHEL
What was the next step in the plan? Shooting someone in the middle of Times Square? While wearing a Goddard Futuristics t-shirt?

KEPLER
Are you done?

RACHEL
(what a beautiful morning this is)
Oh, I'm just getting started. I don't think **anyone** is going to be done with this one for a very long time.

KEPLER
Miss Young... I am the deputy director of intelligence for this division.

They've arrived at an elevator. Rachel presses a button.

KEPLER (CONT'D)
If Major Littlewood wants to give me grief for going against his orders, he can go ahead.

RACHEL
Spoilers: I think he's going to go ahead.

KEPLER
(**ahem**)
But I don't answer to middle management bureaucrats, so you can take this little speech of yours and stow it!
(straightening himself)
I am accountable to exactly **two** men in this company, so unless one of them is about to walk out of this elevator, I don't have to -

DING! The elevator arrives. The doors SLIDE OPEN, revealing -

MR. CUTTER
Captain Kepler. Right on time.

Kepler instantly stiffens.

KEPLER
Mr. Cutter. Sir.

MR. CUTTER
Step into the elevator, Warren.
We're going to have a little chat.

Kepler takes a DEEP BREATH. Well... *shit*. But, ever the professional, after a moment he gets in.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Thank you, Rachel.

RACHEL
Of course, sir. Always happy to be of assistance.

Cutter PRESSES A BUTTON. As the ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(with a little wave)
Have a nice trip!

INT. ELEVATOR - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - CONTINUOUS

Cutter PRESSES ANOTHER BUTTON, and the ELEVATOR starts to MOVE.

MR. CUTTER
So... let's talk about this incident.

KEPLER
Sir, if I could just have a moment? To explain?

Sharp-eared listeners will notice that Cutter isn't just hitting one button, but rather a LONG SERIES of them. Until further notice, however, the elevator's just moving, not making any stops.

MR. CUTTER
I think your record speaks for itself. I think it says **volumes.**
(BEAT)
You don't like working under Richard, do you?

KEPLER
Major Littlewood is a very... he's a very fine administrator.

MR. CUTTER
But... ?

KEPLER
We haven't always seen eye-to-eye.

MR. CUTTER
And... ?

BEAT.

KEPLER
And I think that he's been too timid with the projects that he's chosen to pursue. I think his... excessive caution has hurt this company.

MR. CUTTER
So what you are saying is that he is a...
(BEAT)
C'mon Warren, I can do this all day. Just say it. Say the word.

KEPLER
Coward. He's a coward, sir.

MR. CUTTER
(pointed)
Unlike you?

KEPLER
Sir, I'm not going to pretend that I haven't made mistakes. God knows we're going to have to find a way to clean up this mess. But **fear...** that has never been one of them. Lack of vision has never been one of them.

There's a LONG BEAT. And then -

MR. CUTTER
You know why I hired you, Warren?
(BEAT)
You were bored with being the top of the class. Because you wanted something that would challenge you.
(BEAT)
You're not interested in "best." You're interested in "better." And that means you're never going to stop, are you?

KEPLER
No, sir.

MR. CUTTER
No. You're like me. And to be honest with you, Warren?
(BEAT)
I think that the intelligence division could be doing a little *better* than it is right now. And I've been looking for a reason to shake things up a bit for quite some time.

KEPLER
(waitbuhwhat?)
... sir?

MR. CUTTER
Don't get me wrong. Richard Littlewood's done a great job these past twelve years, but...
(exhales: phew)
I mean this entire thing that just went down... It really is a fiasco. Absolutely ill-conceived, and botched every step of the way. Really, it's a shame that you weren't there, Warren.

KEPLER
(frown deepens)
I wasn't?

MR. CUTTER
Of course not. I think it's clear from your record that an agent of your calibre could **never** be involved in a disaster like that.

KEPLER
Because I wasn't there?

MR. CUTTER
Not even in the same state. You're not going to even hear about it until the department meeting on Monday. Make sure you act surprised *and* appalled.

KEPLER
But... Major Littlewood - ?

MR. CUTTER
Well... it *is* his department. I think he would be the person to talk to about this, wouldn't you?

KEPLER
You're going to crucify him.

MR. CUTTER
(laughs)
Please, Warren... I would never do something like that.
(more to himself)
I'm going to *hang* him.

KEPLER
Sir... which conversation are we having?

MR. CUTTER
What do you mean?

KEPLER
I mean... am I going up or down?

MR. CUTTER
(chuckles)
Well... metaphorically? You're going up. You're going to the very top. But right now? The two of us? We're going very, *very* far down.

The elevator RUMBLES.

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
You're the new Director of Intelligence for Goddard Futuristics's Special Project Division. Congratulations, **Major** Kepler: you passed the interview.

KEPLER
I thought you didn't do interviews.

MR. CUTTER
(you're adorable)
Oh please... don't tell me you actually believed that.

At that moment, the elevator finally SETTLES, arriving wherever it was going with a HISS OF AIR and a pleasant DING!

MR. CUTTER (CONT'D)
Ah! Here we are.

KEPLER
Where... where is "here," sir?

MR. CUTTER
Come on, Dorothy. Don't you want to see what's behind the curtain?

The elevator doors open, and they walk into -

INT. LIBRARY/ARCHIVE - GODDARD FUTURISTICS HEADQUARTERS, CAPE CANAVERAL - CONTINUOUS

It's a massive space - Kepler and Cutter's lines here have a bit of echo to them. It's filled with terminals, files, displays. All of it is neat, perfectly organized, and extremely classified.

Kepler looks around, flabbergasted.

KEPLER
What is this place?

MR. CUTTER
This, Warren, is where things go to disappear. This is the Black Archives.
(typing something into a computer)
There's a couple of things I'm gonna have to catch you up on.

KEPLER
(unnerved)
Like what... ?

MR. CUTTER
Oh... let's start with the files on a 1978 early deep space mission, codenamed the U.S.S. Tiamat. First contact.

KEPLER
First con - ? What do you mean "first contact?"

Cutter looks up from the file. Smiles at Kepler.

MR. CUTTER
What I mean is you may want to fasten your seatbelt, Major Kepler. We're about to leave Kansas, and it's going to be a bumpy ride.

And off of that, we -

FADE OUT.